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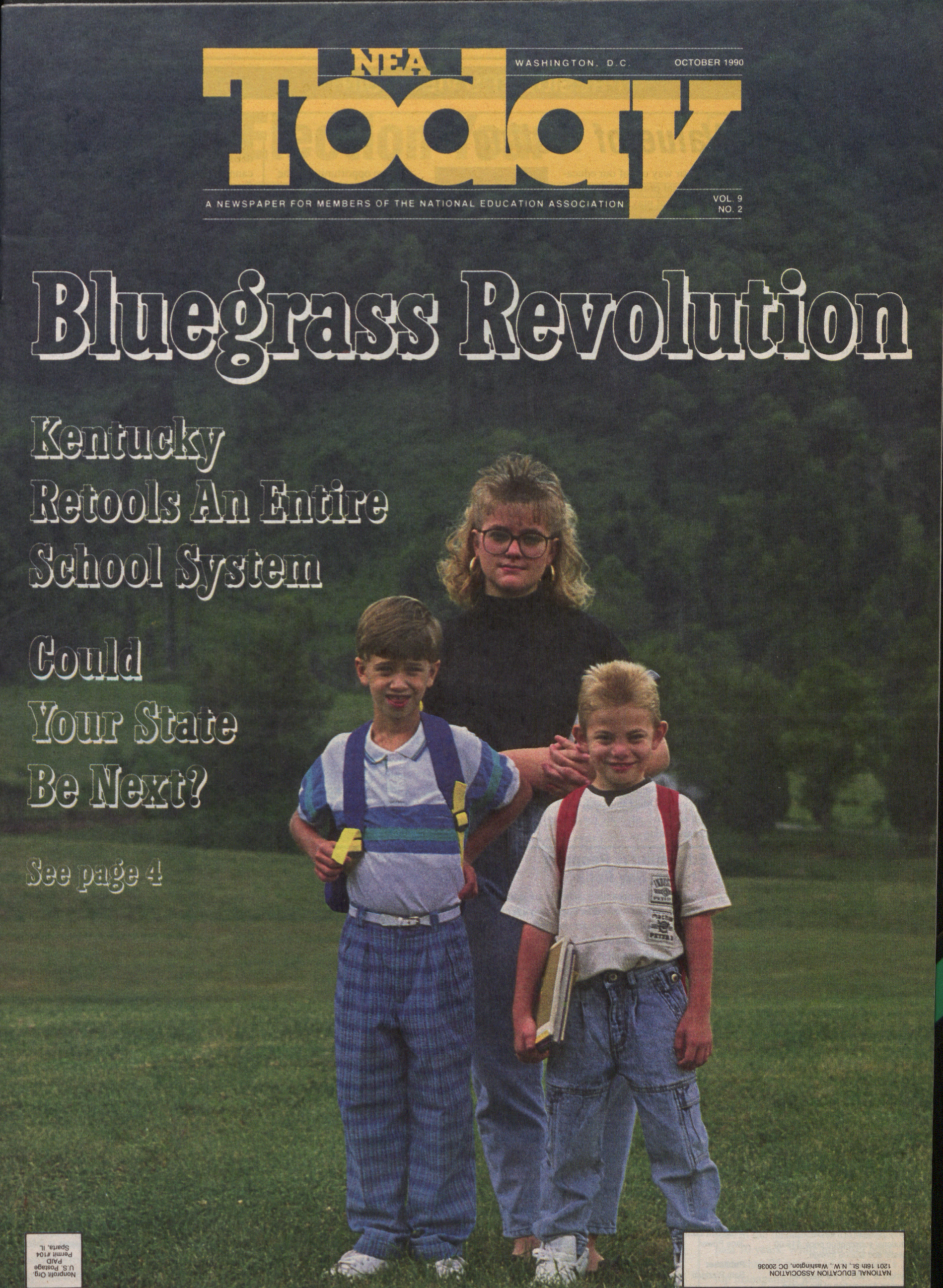
Bluegrass Revolution

Kentucky Retools An Entire School System

Could Your State Be Next?

See page 4



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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Testing the Value of Testing

The political clamor for more student testing continues to grow in volume. When this roar becomes deafening, I tune out—and recall the quiet words of one Association member I spoke with recently.

"Keith," she said, "I'm tired of hearing that our students are still falling short academically. And I have a remedy that won't cost a single penny. If we could eliminate the standardized tests I'm forced to give, I'd have an additional 15 days of instructional time each year. Every hour a student spends filling in those little boxes on the test forms is an hour of learning lost."

This observation perfectly summa-rizes the findings of the recently released National Commission on Testing and Public Policy.

The National Commission report—*From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America*—states that "there is too much educational testing. Mandatory testing consumes some 20 million school days and the equivalent of $700 to $900 million in direct and indirect expenditures annually."

The central thesis of the National Commission report is that we cannot test our way out of our educational problems.

That may be understating the case. Researcher Art Wise, the newly elected president of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, believes standardized tests create problems.

Joe D. Dia

NEA President
Keith Geiger

"Test-driven mandates," Wise maintains, "say to teachers: don't teach everything—just the basics; don't teach children to read—just teach reading skills; don't teach children to write—just teach them to fill in the blanks; don't teach them to think—just teach them the 'right' answers."

Test-driven education is no education at all. It devours time that ought to be devoted to helping students develop higher-order thinking skills. Worse still, it devours student self-esteem.

The National Commission takes note of this syndrome. Too often, the Commission states, standardized tests are employed as the sole basis for evaluating student achievement and potential—and future opportunities. The result is a waste of precious human talent. Tests become a barrier to opportunity rather than a bridge to achievement.

This is a common tragedy—and an avoidable tragedy. There can be little doubt that well-designed standardized tests, *correctly used*, can provide useful educational information. But they should never be used in isolation from other measures of performance and promise. Diverse forms of assessment—demonstrations of ability, observations by teachers, portfolios of work—are essential.

As the Commission puts it: "No single form of assessment can shoulder the unbearable weight of being the sole measure of worth."

When abused and misused, standardized tests limit student potential rather than expanding it—and lock gates of opportunity rather than providing the key that might open them.

There is a compelling issue of social justice here. That's why I'm asking each of you to become actively involved in the debate on standardized tests. For we cannot permit testing mania to roll back the clock on the ideal of equal opportunity. We must transform testing in America—and use it to open the gates of learning for all.

Our challenge is to safeguard the distinction between the use and the abuse of standardized tests. We must reinforce the National Commission's warning that low test scores should "never stigmatize an individual as a 'failure' or permanently restrict the individual's life choices."

NEA members must make the case that even the most well-designed tests can advance the goal of improved learning and teaching only when they are part of a multi-faceted evaluation system.

We must see to it that standardized tests serve the legitimate function of diagnosing student learning needs. They must never again be used to curtail learning opportunity. The student locked out of educational opportunity today will be locked out of economic opportunity tomorrow.

Our goal is justice for all, opportunity for all. When the issue is standardized testing, that means only one thing: better tests, fewer tests.

Inside

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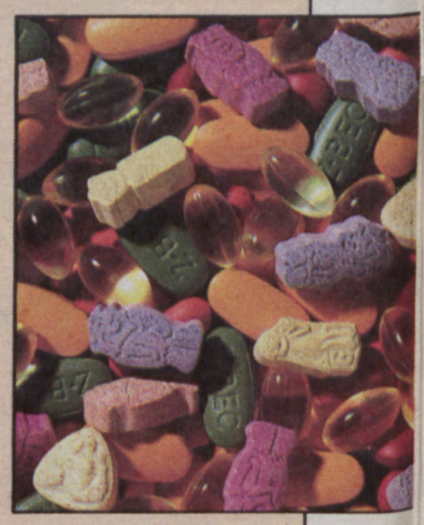
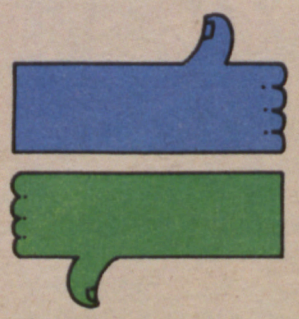
Wouldn't every youngster benefit from attending college? Or would some be wasting their time? A North Carolina teacher is a strong backer of college for all, but an Oregon colleague says, not so fast.





On the cover: Kentucky kids Mark Barnes *(left)*, 7, Heather Collins, 13, and her brother Joshua, also 7. Photograph by Keith Williams.

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NATIONAL NEWS

A Pivotal Election Year

Election '90 could well determine the fate of education for years to come.

For NEA members, the stakes in this November's elections aren't penny ante. In key states around the nation, voters will determine how billions of tax dollars are raised—and spent.

No elections this fall will have a more direct impact on local schools than the anti-tax initiatives on the ballot in at least eight states—the most such initiatives since 1980. The fear: voters will jump on the tax-cut bandwagon, destroy all hopes of effective education reform in some states, and possibly spread the fever nationwide.

Here's a brief rundown of what's at stake in several bellwether states.

► In **Massachusetts**, a group called Citizens for Limited Taxation is seeking to roll back all state taxes and fees at a cost to the state of $6.4 billion over three years. Education—already the victim of $425 million in cuts in the past year alone—will likely lose hundreds of millions more if the initiative passes.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association—with help from NEA—is fighting back with a massive mobilization.

► In **California**, some believe that Proposition 13, the tax limit enacted in 1978, just wasn't enough. Various initiatives on this year's ballot, would, if passed, make it harder for legislators to pass taxes or assess fees for specific purposes such as education. One measure would bar the legislature from raising taxes without a two-thirds vote.

► In **Oregon**, voters will decide if the state will grant $2,500 tax credits to pay for a child's private school tuition or cover the expenses of educating a child at home. The measure would also allow parents to choose any public school statewide for their children to attend.

Oregon state officials say the plan would immediately siphon away $67 million a year from public schools. Oregon Education Association members are fighting the program, which they say will undermine public education and violate the separation of church and state.

In addition, OEA members—and other pro-education groups—are fighting a tax-cut initiative that could devastate education funding. If the POPS (Protect Oregon Property Society) initiative passes, property taxes would be reduced from an average of $17 per $1000 in assessed property value now to $5 per $1000 five years from now. (Sixty percent of Oregon's education revenues come from property taxes.)

In **Arizona**, pro-education citizens will get a chance to vote yes on a ballot initiative. Co-sponsored by the Arizona Education Association, Proposition 103 would amend the state constitution to include three goals for public schools—improving basic skills, reducing the drop-out rate, and better preparing students for employment and college.

If passed, $100 per student per year would be added to the education budget for the next 10 years to fund a plan to reach the three goals.

Jay Sailors/Alabama Journal

The next governor of Alabama may well be Paul Hubbert, former teacher and current executive secretary of NEA's Alabama affiliate. NEA members in Alabama are going all-out to help Hubbert beat an incumbent, who's paid only lip service to education.

Election '90 at a Glance

Toughest Anti-Education Candidate to Beat: North Carolina's notorious Jesse Helms is up against former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt, who's seeking to become the first Black U.S. senator from the South since Reconstruction. In 1984, Helms outspent every other Senate candidate in the entire nation. Last year, on five key Senate votes on education, Helms took the anti-education position all five times.

Highest Stakes?: The three states that recorded the biggest population increases in the '90 Census—California, Texas, and Florida—will gain over a dozen new members of Congress. These same three states all elect new governors this fall. These governors will largely determine how new legislative districts are drawn in their states. The redistricting decisions they make could change the political complexion of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Middle America's Best Republican?: In Iowa, the NEA state affiliate is backing Governor Terry Branstad, a Republican, for re-election. Thanks in large part to Branstad's work, the nation's governors earlier this year committed themselves to the first-ever national goals for education.

Middle America's Best Democrat?: In Iowa, NEA's state affiliate is working to re-elect Tom Harkin, a Democrat, to the U.S. Senate. Harkin advocates new national budget priorities that would shift tax dollars from Cold War nuclear weaponry to public education. He's also a key player on the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, a fact that makes his re-election nationally significant.

The Squeakers: Up for re-election this fall are two members of Congress who won their 1988 races by the barest of margins. Washington State's Jolene Unsoeld, a winner by 618 votes, has proved an effective voice on the House Education and Labor Committee. She has NEA backing for her re-election bid.

In Oregon, Denny Smith, a consistent opponent of adequate federal aid to education, edged out NEA-backed challenger Mike Kopetski by just 707 votes in '88. Kopetski will try again in '90.

Looking Ahead

The National Science Foundation will decide soon whether to fund NEA's proposal for university summer institutes to update teachers' science and math knowledge. The proposal suggests three pilot states—and has received the endorsement of all three governors involved.... NEA's National Center for Innovation will hold a major symposium on education reform Nov. 8-11 in Colorado Springs.... The National Governors' Association's new panel to assess the nation's progress toward meeting national education goals is expected to begin work later this year. The recently named panel includes six governors, four administration officials, and four nonvoting Congressional delegates.

Worst Ad #1

The winner for maligning an entire profession to make a point: the Partnership for a Drug Free America. The organization is running a television commercial showing a middle-aged, middle-class woman repeatedly snorting cocaine. An announcer says, "This doesn't affect you," then pauses while the woman is shown behind the wheel of a school bus..."Does it?"

Worst Ad #2

The clear winner for repeat offenses: Roy Rogers. The fast food chain's new owners tried to save money by running an old series of ads showing stereotypical, unattractive school cafeteria workers serving stereotypical, unappetizing cafeteria fare. Two years ago, after food service workers raised the roof, Roy's yanked the ads. But the ads aired again this year. Now, after more protests from food service workers, Roy's again canned the ads. Hopefully for good.

Best Ad, Best Cause

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is fighting a big-stakes ballot initiative to roll back taxes and fees with a big-stakes "sweepstakes." MTA's new brochure calls the referendum "the game of chance that goes too far."

Inside, readers can scratch three boxes to win (or lose) prizes. Scratch the first box and "you're fired." Second box: You keep your job—but your class size doubles. Third box: The district's out of money—pay for your own supplies. The campaign is being jointly funded by MTA and NEA.

Democracy on the March

The number of candidates running unopposed for Congress continues to grow. Sixty-two members had no major party opposition in 1984, 70 in 1986, and 75 in 1988. This November, 82 members—four senators, 78 House members—will get a free ride. And people wonder why voter turnout continues to decline.

The Stand Still Award

The glass ceiling lives. Recent research released by UCLA shows no change in the number of women and minorities landing top executive jobs in the business world over the past 10 years. White men still hold more than 95 percent of the nation's top management jobs.

COVER STORY

Kentucky Overhauls

This fall, more than half a million Kentucky students returned to schools transformed by state law. Across the nation, educators are watching closely to see if Kentucky's changes can trace a new educational blueprint for their own states.

The Upper Cumberland region of southeastern Kentucky. Mining camps line the railroad tracks. Small, wood-framed houses line the hollers.

For years, schools in this part of rural Kentucky have struggled. Endemic poverty, low taxes, and a patronage system that keeps relatives and friends of local officials in positions of power have led to inadequate facilities, dwindling supplies, low teacher salaries.

"This area was always at the bottom of education statistics, always held up as an example of how bad things could get," says Pat Bingham, a fifth grade teacher in Pineville and president of the Bell County Education Association.

Pineville, Kentucky, may soon become a symbol of a very different sort. Last spring, Kentucky lawmakers enacted what may be the most ambitious statewide education reform package yet.

In the seven years since the landmark report *A Nation at Risk*, no state has enacted changes as sweeping as Kentucky's—and backed these changes with significantly higher levels of education funding. In the law's first year, 1990-91, state spending on education will rise by more than 25 percent.

For the first time, teachers in Bell County and the rest of the state feel they have a chance to provide an appropriate education to the students they teach.

"We're serving notice to the nation that times are changing," explains Bell County teacher Pat Bingham. "Access to quality education will no longer depend on whether a child lives in the holler or the hills, the inner city or the wealthy suburb."

"For the first time, Kentucky will have a teacher-majority professional standards board," adds Kentucky Education Association President David Allen.

The massive reform (see box below) establishes a new funding system designed to close the gap between the state's richest and poorest districts. The law emphasizes programs in early-childhood education and prekindergarten. For K-3 students, it creates a primary school system geared to eliminate failure by eliminating grade levels. And with mandated site-based management, says Allen, educators finally have the authority to create better schools for their students.

"For the next six years, as these reforms are implemented," adds Allen, "educators will be the agents of change."

A few years back, Kentucky hardly seemed a candidate for national leadership in education reform.

The state epitomizes the sharp contrast between rich and poor, haves and have-nots.

In wealthy suburbs, schools enjoy strong financial support. They spend more than $3,000 per pupil per year, with extra money for state-of-the-art computers, band equipment, and field trips.

In rural Appalachian counties, the scene —until this fall—was quite different. Many schools spent no more than $1,800 per pupil per year.

Students attended classes in buildings badly in need of repair. Teachers dipped into their own pockets to pay for paper, workbooks, and chalk. In Floyd County, things got so bad that the state took over the school system.

A 1988 state audit revealed that Floyd County students raised more money for the schools by selling candy and magazines than the county school district received in local taxes.

This gap between rich and poor, and its impact on Kentucky's ability to provide quality education to all its children, prompted the Kentucky state supreme court to strike down the school finance system in 1989. The court handed over the school system to state legislators with one simple instruction. Rebuild Kentucky's schools.

And now this massive reconstruction has begun.

In Bell County, one of the 66 counties whose original lawsuit led to the landmark supreme court decision, the reforms have had an immediate impact. A budget increase of $2 million for the 1990-91 school year enabled the district to hire

Photographs by Keith Williams

"If education reform starts, then let it start here," says Pat Bingham, Bell County Education Association president.

Kentucky's Reform Act at a Glance

- ► State-funded preschool for all at-risk four-year-olds and all handicapped three-and four-year-olds.
- ► Family resource centers in or near all elementary schools in which at least 20 percent of students match federal poverty guidelines.
- ► An ungraded primary school program for children from the time they enter school until they are ready for fourth grade.
- ► A council composed of teachers, parents, and administrators to make decisions at each school.
- ► A guaranteed minimum per-pupil spending level of $2,900 in the 1990-91 school year. Overall state financing for elementary and secondary education will increase from the current $1.5 billion to $1.9 billion.
- ► An autonomous, teacher-majority Professional Standards Board holding all certification authority.
- ► Upgraded technology, including a phone in every classroom and discounts and training for teachers buying computers for their personal use.

COVER STORY

Its Schools

Country Roads to City Streets

Laurel County teacher Bob Wilson is cautious about the new reforms.

Jefferson County educators (left to right) Dianne Barham, Sara Scott, and Maggie Florence of Byck Elementary, where site-based decision making is standard.

nine new teachers and provide students with a counselor, as well as art, music, and physical education specialists.

Bell County teachers, says fifth grade teacher Bingham, will also receive $100 per classroom for discretionary spending.

"That may seem like a paltry sum, but my members feel like the angel Gabriel has come down and answered our prayers," she says. "Can you imagine not worrying anymore about running out of chalk or paper? It's earthshaking."

Site-based management has energized the county's educators, Bingham says: "In the past, educators felt their creativity stifled. Now, they feel the horizon is unlimited."

While school employees are excited by the possibilities, they're also cautious, knowing that many parts of the reform package must still move from paper into practice.

In truth, some parts of the Kentucky public school system were already of cutting-edge quality. The Louisville-area Jefferson County school system has been a reform leader for years.

June Lee, president of the Jefferson County Teachers Association, says educators are thrilled with the reforms but ask, Are they going to be enough?

"It's very important that the legislature involve the professionals now and listen to our questions," says Lee.

"We're the ones who'll make changes like the ungraded primary grades and the family resource centers work," adds Lee.

KEA has set up 13 oversight committees to monitor the progress of the education reforms and maintain contact with the legislature. KEA also held regional training sessions for members throughout the state.

And local Associations in Floyd and Boyd Counties have already taken their local officials to task. When the superintendents and school boards resisted implementing many of the changes and salary increases mandated by the Education Reform Act, the educators walked—in Kentucky's first teacher strikes since 1976. In both cases, the community gave its support to the educators and the local officials gave in.

"These actions were about more than salary," says KEA president David Allen. "They were about ensuring change."

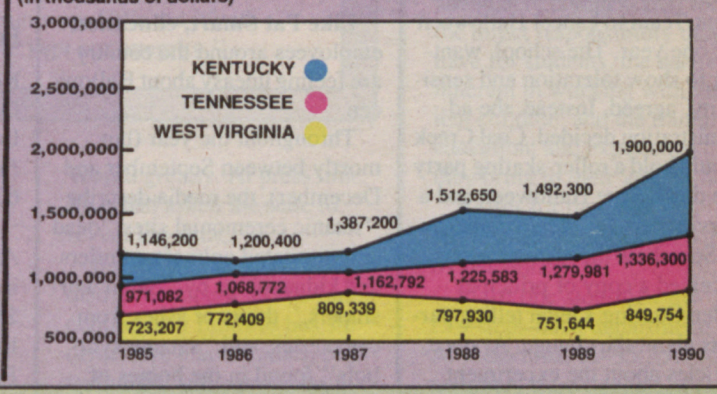
"I've been an educator for 20 years. To see 250 educators stand up as they did in our county and say, 'You said it's supposed to happen, we demand it does happen' is just earthshaking to me," adds Bingham. "Education will never be the same again."

—Anita Merina

How Kentucky Stacks Up

Kentucky now picks up about 70 percent of the state's total spending on education. In 1990, that percentage translates to $1.9 billion, an increase of more than 25 percent over 1989. That's the highest percentage boost of any other state in the mideast region.

State Spending on Education
(in thousands of dollars)



HUMAN RIGHTS

THE 'HORRORS' OF HALLOWEEN

In 1987, Coal Creek Elementary School in Louisville, Colo., banned Halloween for a year. The media blew the matter sky-high.

Three years ago this fall Pat Smart started teaching fourth grade at Coal Creek. A 25-year veteran of the Boulder Valley schools, Smart had just finished four years as president of the Boulder Valley Education Association (BVEA). She was looking forward to a meaningful, quiet year with her students.

"Instead, we had an incredible autumn," she recalls, "full of crises that cut down on the learning that should have been going on."

Just what happened at Coal Creek? In the spring of 1987, a small group of parents protested the school's traditional Halloween observance, expressing fears of satanism. Quietly working through the proper channels, they asked the School Improvement Team to cancel Halloween for one year. The school, wanting to show toleration and sensitivity, agreed. Instead, the administration decided, Coal Creek would hold a roller-skating party the day before Halloween and a harvest festival in November.

Somehow the local newspaper received a copy of principal Ellen Goering's letter telling parents about the change. At once, articles about the experiment appeared in newspapers, reporters called from as far away as New York City, the *Today* show interviewed the protesting parents, and TV cameras invaded Coal Creek's classrooms.

"The kids handled it well," Smart says, "and we taught as well as we could under the circumstances. In fact, we went beyond the usual curriculum to teach about toleration."

Goering met twice a day with the faculty to make sure they were informed and able to counter rumors. The crisis passed. Halloween returned the next year, and faculty again put up posters of pumpkins and friendly ghosts—"but never a witch anymore," says Smart. "We don't tempt fate."

Like Pat Smart, education employees around the country are feeling uneasy about Halloween.

Throughout the year (but mostly between September and December), the media describe "satanic ceremonial sites," dead and mutilated animals, murders and kidnappings by "Satan worshipers," thefts of ashes from cemeteries, and "satanic symbols" found in the homes of youths who have committed suicide.

Then people, of various occupations, who call themselves "anti-satanists" panic the public by exaggerating these macabre scenes. They address meetings, including school assemblies—and, says Kenneth Lanning, the FBI's authority on cults and satanism—they tailor the facts to suit their beliefs.

With no verifiable evidence, Lanning reports, "anti-satanists" frighten the American people with claims that satanic cults breed and eat babies and murder 50,000 missing children each year, that satanists are taking over day-care centers, and that animals found dead have actually been sacrificial victims.

The result is confusion that often borders on hysteria, according to NEA Human and Civil Rights (HCR), which monitors this issue. Parents have kept children away from playgrounds because of rumors of satanism.

And both right-wing and religious extremists have accused school employees of witchcraft for using magic circles as a teaching technique, have forced school libraries to remove books that mention witches, have secured bans on textbooks containing stories about violence or sorcery, and in one case have demanded that a school change its logo from a demon to something less sinister.

If confusion or hysteria hits your school this Halloween, what should you do? "Stick together as a faculty, and keep informed," recommends Coal Creek's Pat Smart. And Willis Knierim—who headed BVEA during the Halloween crisis—adds: "Be watchful. Don't let any element in the community take the schools captive and make decisions that are rightfully ours."

And, most important of all, report "anti-satanist" activity immediately to your local Association. It's your best defense against what's usually the real aim of such activity—an attack on public education.

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

For Further Reading:

Kenneth V. Lanning, "Satanic, Occult, Ritualistic Crime: A Law Enforcement Perspective." *Police Chief*, October 1989, pp. 62-84.

School Intervention Report, April-May 1990. This special issue on satanism is available for $4 from Learning Publications, Inc., Dept. S63, P.O. Box 1338, Holmes Beach, FL 34218-1338.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Democracy in Danger

"I'm a political employee. Every education employee is," says Missouri English teacher Frank Rossetter. "If we don't have legislators who support our programs, then I don't have a computer in my classroom, I can't reduce my class size, I can't get the supplies I need.

"People can try to stay 'above' politics. They can talk about doing so and pass positions on it, but unless we have friends in the right places, it just looks nice on paper and doesn't help education."

A small but regular contributor to Missouri NEA's political action committee, Rossetter chose to make donations via a PAC because he believes his check makes a bigger difference if it's coupled with other contributions. "Candidates know where the money comes from, and we know they'll listen to our point of view," he says.

But the practice of small donors banding together in political action committees to make group contributions to candidates is in grave danger. As we go to press, Congress is considering proposals to limit PACs or even abolish them altogether.

As it stands now, an individual can give a candidate up to $1,000 a year, and a PAC can give up to $5,000 to a candidate for each primary and general election.

A campaign finance reform of the '70s, PACs were devised as a means to regulate campaign contributions in federal elections. But some in Washington circles now attack PACs. In fact, PACs enhance democracy by:

► Encouraging citizens to participate in politics. PACs have spurred millions of Americans to get involved in our political system.

► Stimulating small, individual donations. The establishment of PACs has led to a resurgence of small contributions. For example, NEA-PAC contributions usually come in small amounts—$1, $2, or $10 from members all over the country. Last year NEA-PAC received an average contribution of $1.15 per member.

► Protecting against political dominance by the rich and powerful. PACs ensure that by joining together, small donors can have a big role in the electoral process.

► Providing political education. PACs have become effective and consistent media of communication about issues and candidates.

► Increasing public accountability. PACs' link to their members and full disclosure requirements let the public know who's giving what to whom—and why.

► Diversifying political funding. Right now, over 4,000 PACs—representing almost as many different interests—contribute to candidates for federal office. In other words, PACs have a purpose.

Local Look

MARYLAND

Getting Organized

For school support staff on Maryland's eastern shore, life without bargaining is a lonely existence. The region is the only one in the state where legislators have chosen—under the state's local option law—to deny bargaining rights to support staff.

But times are changing. Association locals representing hundreds of members in eight counties—Kent, Caroline, Talbot, Queen Anne, Dorchester, Wicomico, and Worcester—have formed a regional consortium, the Maryland State Educational Service Council (MSESC) East. The group hopes to raise public awareness of support staff needs and work toward common political goals.

"We decided we needed an active bloc of our own," says Kent County MSESC President Valerie Anderson.

ALABAMA

Students Benefit From Local Initiative

Members of the Jackson County Education Association at North Sand Mountain School in Higdon, Ala., didn't start out to change their school's curriculum. But that's exactly what's happened. At first their concern was limited to a textbook that students were having trouble with. Then last February, 16 teachers and librarians began meeting to discuss problems in the language arts program.

According to Steve Buckner, a sixth grade teacher and committee chair, "The process of discussing what worked and didn't work in our classrooms helped develop solutions. That immediate success got the committee even more excited about having control over what we taught and how it was being taught."

OREGON

Trying To Clean Up A Classroom Act

School exits blocked by desks and chairs. Three textbooks for 16 bilingual students. Classes packed, 29 students and more to a room. These are just three examples of the terrible conditions that inspectors from the Oregon Department of Education found recently when they investigated Salem-Keizer schools at the request of the Salem Education Associaton.

The state ruled the district "out of standard" in three areas: safety, individual attention, and equal educational opportunity. But in the fourth area, class size, the state found no deficiencies—which disturbs SEA President Rob Worral greatly. At press time, SEA had asked the state to revisit the issue.

Since the state ruling, the district has spent $67,000 in contingency funds to bus students, hire teacher aides, buy textbooks, and convert multipurpose rooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias into classrooms. "But," says Worral, "with more than 1,000 new students, overcrowding is even more of an issue now."

BREAKTHROUGH IN NEW YORK

Bill Warren

Ithaca leaders, seated (left to right): Sandy Washington, Noreen Moore, Sandra Musal, and Tracy Saulsgiver. Standing (left to right): Gayleen Austen, Michele Gordon, and Sue Wilcox.

Ithaca Parapros Gain 25% Pay Hike

Parapros walked about it, community supporters talked about it, the school board balked about it. But last summer, after 15 months of tough, smart bargaining, the Ithaca, N.Y., Paraprofessional Association signed a contract giving the 155 Ithaca parapros and aides a 25 percent raise.

"Ours became a moral issue, an issue of justice," says Moore. "Our members recognized what unionism is and set an example for other workers in the area."

Two themes ran through the campaign: the value of the parapros' work and the poverty level of their wages.

A lot of community organizing went into the parapro victory. IPA mobilized members' out-of-school skills and local contacts, including those of IPA president and founding member Noreen Moore, an experienced community organizer. When the crunch came, support for the IPA was virtually unanimous.

The Tompkins-Cortland Labor Coalition—representing 37 unions, with 10,000 members from musicians to firefighters to the Ithaca Teachers Association—addressed the school board. Testified ITA representative Randi Beckmann: "Few components of our educational system are more crucial to my ability to teach than having capable and satisfied paraprofessionals.

"It's hard to imagine many higher priorities than fair compensation and a morale-boosting contract for our paraprofessionals," Beckmann continued, noting that a majority of paraprofessionals make less than $10,000 a year.

The Tompkins County Human Rights Commission awarded IPA members its Human Rights Recognition Award for "maintaining their devoted efforts on behalf of children" while "continuing their principled struggle for an equitable contract" and "living in poverty or near-poverty conditions."

The Ithaca High School music and drama departments dedicated to the parapros a special performance of *Working* (a musical based on the Studs Terkel book). A building principal wrote to the school board backing the parapros. Ithaca residents displayed red ribbons as a sign of support. Twice, 200 members and supporters turned out for school board meetings.

In the end, beyond the first-year retroactive 25 percent raise (from $4 to $5 an hour for the lowest paid parapros), ITA's contract provides a 200-day work year, training for parapros, substitute's pay for any parapro providing direct instruction for more than one day, and credit for up to five years educational or human rights experience.

As Moore sums up: "We did it with dignity, and we kept our integrity."

COLORADO

Curbing a Miserly School Board

A $10 million reserve fund was the issue that turned Colorado's St. Vrain Valley school district into the site of an increasingly unpleasant teacher-school board contract dispute last year.

"The board was willing to give teachers only a 3 percent salary increase for 1990," says St. Vrain Valley Education Association President Jo Stanfield. "This, when salaries for veteran teachers were falling below neighboring school districts."

The differing perceptions over how much extra is enough led to a seven-month stalemate in negotiations. Ultimately, after rejecting a factfinder's report and threatening a strike, SVVEA went to arbitration and accepted an 8.25 percent increase over two years.

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor Parapros Bargain Pay Equity

About 140 Ann Arbor parapros will share an estimated $550,000 over the next four to five years in what is likely the first major pay equity settlement in the nation for educational paraprofessionals.

The settlement resulted from a classification study the Ann Arbor Education Association of Paraprofessionals (AAEAP) bargained in 1988. The study—done by a Washington, D.C., consultant—showed that parapros were not adequately compensated for the direct responsibility they have for students, the danger inherent in working with violent children, and the training, education, and experience they bring to their jobs.

Raises for the 1989-90 school year ranged from 6 to 31 percent.

In the one-step-forward-two-steps-back department: At press time, 30-35 AAEAP members were threatened by layoffs.

State Side

NEBRASKA

Popping the Two Percent Lid

The November ballot has a constitutional amendment that—if it passed—would bring state and local government to a halt.

The amendment would create a cap of 2 percent a year on the allowable budget increase for every political entity in the state—legislature, courts, municipalities, and school districts. "This is a survival issue for public education," says Nebraska State Education Association President Jim Rea.

That's why NSEA and other groups that support public services have created a statewide coalition to defeat the cap called People Against the Two Percent Lid (PAL).

Local Associations are donating to PAL.

Omaha gave $30,000; Lincoln has promised $15,000; and NSEA's newest affiliate, at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, started with $550.

PAL plans to use contributions (including major donations from NSEA and NEA) for TV and newspaper ads to explain why the two percent lid would be such a disaster.

MISSOURI

MNEA Launches Action Plan

Like many other educators, Missouri NEA's President Martha Karlovetz is tired of education reports. So this fall, she's criss-crossing the state with a new five-point, five-year action plan.

For real education improvement, MNEA is calling for:

- ► elimination of all classroom interruptions
- ► release time and flex time for parents to attend school conferences and activities
- ► telephones on all teachers' desks
- ► delegation of all teachers' non-teaching duties
- ► maximum class size of 20.

Along Karlovetz's route, members will be asked to form local action groups to begin implementing the first of these goals. MNEA has already begun exploring potential legislative solutions.

WHERE THE JOBS ARE

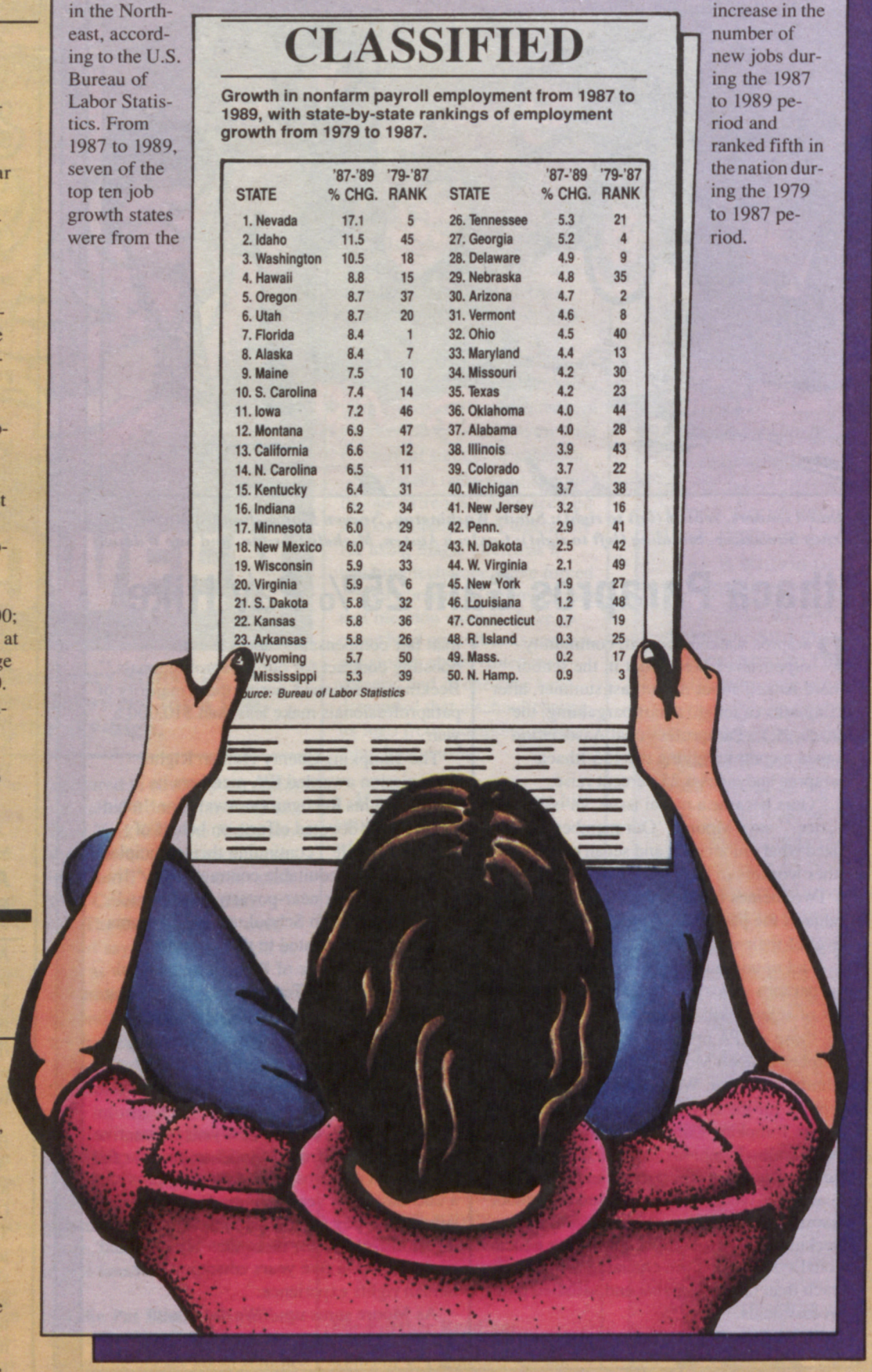
States in the West region of the nation are now producing more new jobs than states in the Northeast, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. From 1987 to 1989, seven of the top ten job growth states were from the West region, four from the Pacific Northwest. Nevada led all states with a 17 percent increase in the number of new jobs during the 1987 to 1989 period and ranked fifth in the nation during the 1979 to 1987 period.

CLASSIFIED

Growth in nonfarm payroll employment from 1987 to 1989, with state-by-state rankings of employment growth from 1979 to 1987.

STATE	'87-'89 % CHG.	'79-'87 RANK	STATE	'87-'89 % CHG.	'79-'87 RANK
1. Nevada	17.1	5	26. Tennessee	5.3	21
2. Idaho	11.5	45	27. Georgia	5.2	4
3. Washington	10.5	18	28. Delaware	4.9	9
4. Hawaii	8.8	15	29. Nebraska	4.8	35
5. Oregon	8.7	37	30. Arizona	4.7	2
6. Utah	8.7	20	31. Vermont	4.6	8
7. Florida	8.4	1	32. Ohio	4.5	40
8. Alaska	8.4	7	33. Maryland	4.4	13
9. Maine	7.5	10	34. Missouri	4.2	30
10. S. Carolina	7.4	14	35. Texas	4.2	23
11. Iowa	7.2	46	36. Oklahoma	4.0	44
12. Montana	6.9	47	37. Alabama	4.0	28
13. California	6.6	12	38. Illinois	3.9	43
14. N. Carolina	6.5	11	39. Colorado	3.7	22
15. Kentucky	6.4	31	40. Michigan	3.7	38
16. Indiana	6.2	34	41. New Jersey	3.2	16
17. Minnesota	6.0	29	42. Penn.	2.9	41
18. New Mexico	6.0	24	43. N. Dakota	2.5	42
19. Wisconsin	5.9	33	44. W. Virginia	2.1	49
20. Virginia	5.9	6	45. New York	1.9	27
21. S. Dakota	5.8	32	46. Louisiana	1.2	48
22. Kansas	5.8	36	47. Connecticut	0.7	19
23. Arkansas	5.8	26	48. R. Island	0.3	25
Wyoming	5.7	50	49. Mass.	0.2	17
Mississippi	5.3	39	50. N. Hamp.	0.9	3

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



TENNESSEE

Enforcing Minor Labor Law

TEA is working with the state department of labor to see that a new law restricting the hours of student employment is enforced. The law prohibits students from working during normal school hours.

Students must also secure from their parents a signed and notarized statement of consent allowing them to work between the hours of 10 p.m. and midnight, Sunday through Thursday evenings, no more than three nights a week. TEA lobbied aggressively to get the law passed.

Notes Executive Secretary-Treasurer Cavit C. Cheshier, 'After a two-year effort in the legislature, we were able to pass a bill which puts reasonable regulations on student employment and puts strong teeth in the enforcement. I encourage teachers to see that this new law is honored.'

PENNSYLVANIA

PSEA to Kids: Just Say 'Yes'

"We have to give this generation something to say 'yes' to," says Harrisburg entrepreneur David Cobb—and a lot of groups, including the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the Governor's Drug Policy Council, are saying 'amen' to that. The result: an education-business team to fight drug abuse.

Cobb's firm, Metropolitan Graphics, has been turning out "Dopebusters" coloring books, comic books, T-shirts, and posters.

PSEA has bought 5,000 coloring books imprinted with the state Association logo from the minority business; several large local Associations will distribute the books to students. The PSEA/NEA Allegheny County/Pittsburgh Program is looking for backing from local businesses so it can give even more books to elementary students, while in suburban Pittsburgh the Woodland Hills Education Association has bought 3,500 more of the books to hand out.

"What we want is to have students decide for themselves not to use drugs," says PSEA President John Yarnovic. "By helping dispel ignorance about drugs, a campaign like this can form a vital step in that process."

NORTH CAROLINA

Front Line Wins

North Carolina educators are veterans at battling for education funding. So when the General Assembly set its sights on cutting education funds to ease the state's budget crisis, the North Carolina Association of Educators closed ranks.

They defeated an attempt to eliminate the newly adopted teachers' salary schedule, protecting a pay hike.

And when the General Assembly proposed switching driver education to the Department of Transportation, NCAE defeated this move, too, saving 735 teaching positions in the process.

"NCAE didn't settle for any tricky budget balancing tactics," explains NCAE President Julia Kron.

Meet:

Champion of Children's TV

In 1968, as a parent with a little free time, Peggy Charren founded Action for Children's Television (ACT), a lean, effective advocacy group dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of children's television programming.

Ever since then, she's been prodding broadcasters, fighting with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), pushing national legislation, writing books, and blitzing the media.

What's kept this unique fighter in full uniform for so long? NEA Communications staffer Carolyn Wallace visited Charren to find out.

Just what's wrong with children's television?
Commercial broadcasting is what's wrong with children's television. There's a lack of choice and diversity. It's like a video library filled with producers' catalogs.

No nonfiction shelves. No really wonderful stories that make you cry and laugh, or teach about how people work. No stories that focus on the diverse populations of this country and their heritage, to say nothing about the different populations around the world.

What's on television is not helping young kids deal with some of the major problems in America today. And, given that kids watch an average of 25 hours a week, television is one medium that really could make a difference.

You've been called "Johnny-one-note." How do you respond to that?
Increasing options for children—that's the note we've been singing for 22 years. It's one reason we're still here.

When I started, no one was working on the responsibility of broadcasters to provide a diverse service to children. I pointed out that serving children doesn't mean limiting options for adults.

What was the impact of the Communications Act of 1934?
To us, it's been the only reason ACT could exist for 22 years—the one hook we could hang a campaign on without saying, "Take it off the air, I don't like it." ACT is very opposed to censorship as a way of dealing with issues of children in media. I think censorship is worse than all the junk.

The Communications Act says the broadcast spectrum is a public resource—like land. You can make zoning rules to tell people what they can and can't do with their land. You can also tell the broadcasters that the gift of their license carries a legal obligation to serve the public, which includes children.

Most TV programs are pretty bad. Why focus on kids' shows?
Children, because they're vulnerable, should receive better service. They learn in the classroom. They learn from television. Sometimes we forget that they're learning from everything they see.

Not to use television for the benefit of children, at least sometimes, is not only illegal, it's outrageous. That's why ACT pushed the FCC to get the industry to serve children. During the '70s, it was working. The FCC was saying to broadcasters, "You've got to serve children." Kids' TV was getting better.

What's happened since then?
Ronald Reagan came in with a deregulatory attitude. He appointed as Commission Chair Mark Fowler, who said television was no more than a toaster with pictures. He said we worry about it too much. The broadcasters took that to mean they didn't have to serve children. So they dumped good programs.

For example, CBS had hired 20 people in the news department to do news for children: *In the News*, a series of spots between cartoons; two magazine shows; *30 Minutes*, a spinoff of *60 Minutes*; and a set of specials on the election process. Shortly after Fowler made the statement, CBS fired or reassigned the 20 people and canceled all these shows.

Program-length commercials took over. Over 70 such shows, mostly series, are the direct result of the deregulation policy of the Reagan Administration.

How will the new Children's Television Act of 1990 improve the situation?
It's going to bring back the attitude of the '70s, in spades. It puts a cap on the number of commercials permitted during children's programs. The central portion mandates stations to serve the education needs of children.

What has ACT achieved over the years?
ACT has some very specific victories in the advertising arena. Our first fight was against ads for vitamin pills. The boxes had a warning on the back—"Keep out of the reach of children"—but the ads were selling the pills like candy. We filed a formal complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, and the ads were stopped.

We complained to the Federal Trade Commission about ads encouraging kids who are home alone after school to call area code 900 numbers to talk to cartoon characters. In response, the FTC started an investigation that's still going on.

How has NEA worked with ACT?
NEA has been a co-advocate on every issue ACT has promoted for better children's television. It's not afraid to put its name on issues that serve children. The public found out about children's television issues from the press and from our incredible coalition of organizations—NEA, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National PTA, and the National Catholic Education Association.

NEA, and almost every other major educational organization in the country, joined our effort to get Whittle [the promoter now pushing a commercial-laden video news show into schools] out of the classroom. It was the first time ACT really talked about what went on in school.

What are some of the good children's television programs?
Public television programs for children are terrific. In addition to *Mr. Rogers* and *Sesame Street*, we have *Wonder Works*, a kind of *Masterpiece Theatre* for children; *Square One* and *3-2-1 Contact* from the Children's Television Workshop; and *Long Ago and Far Away* and *Reading Rainbow*, which lead children to books.

Another alternative for parents who turn off commercial broadcasting is home videos. There are wonderful tapes based on children's books. ACT is working with the Carnegie Foundation in New York and the American Library Association to encourage more libraries to increase their video selections.

How can parents and education employees encourage children to watch more good programs?
First, they should watch some of the most popular kids series. You can't know what kids are seeing and hearing unless you watch what they're watching on television. Most of them see the same shows every day. And that's what they're learning.

Then, adults can make wonderful shows attractive to children. Good programs don't get promoted to children the same way the junk does. So caring adults can be part of the promotion effort for terrific programs, especially on public television.

What does the future hold for children's programming—and for ACT?
Kids' television has two possible futures. It can keep going as it has in the past and get worse, with more commercials and fewer serviceable programs. Or it can get the attention of parents, teachers, government officials, broadcasters, and producers. If all of us work together, we can make television serve the educational as well as entertainment needs of children, with programs that show how and why the world works.

ACT will continue to focus on how broadcasting serves children, and when things aren't right, we'll yap.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Disney

Invention—*The Discovery Channel, Tuesdays, October 2-December 25, 9:30-10 p.m. ET.* Part of NEA's 1990-91 media campaign, this 13-part series by The Discovery Channel and the Smithsonian Institution highlights the ingenuity of innovators whose creations are now part of everyday life. *(See p. 29.)*

Race To Save the Planet—*PBS, premieres Thursday, October 4, 8-9 p.m., and airs Sunday, October 7-11, 9-11 p.m. ET.* This 10-part series examines international environmental issues. For a high school teacher's guide, contact Karen Barss, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

Scientific American Frontiers—*PBS, premieres Wednesday, October 10, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Replacing *Discover: The World of Science*, this five-part series offers fascinating glimpses of scientific investigations. Sponsor GTE has granted complete off-air videotaping rights. For free teaching materials for grades 7-12, call 1-800-523-5948.

The Fourth Man—*CBS, Tuesday, October 16, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* Tragedy results when the son of a former football star uses steroids to gain a competitive edge. A CBS Schoolbreak Special.

Craig Sjodine

Testing Dirty—*ABC, Thursday, October 18, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* This ABC Afterschool Special dramatizes the controversy about random drug testing in public schools *(photo above).*

Gunplay: The Last Day in the Life of Brian Darling—*HBO, check local listings for dates and times.* The true story of a 10-year-old accidentally killed while he and a friend played with a handgun. The boy's father, John Darling, introduces the film and gives gun safety tips at its conclusion.

Back to Hannibal: The Return of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn—*The Disney Channel, check local listings for dates and times.* Disney recalls the Mark Twain tales with a film on Sawyer and Finn as young adults *(photo at left).*

Futures—*PBS, check local listings for dates and times.* This new series, hosted by nationally acclaimed teacher—and NEA member—Jaime Escalante, demonstrates real-world applications of mathematics. *(See p. 29.)*

A&E Premieres: In Search of the Dream—*Arts & Entertainment Network, Sundays through October, 8-9 p.m., and Sunday, November 4, 8-10 p.m. ET.* This five-part series examines the successes and struggles that have defined the Black experience in America. For a study guide, contact Community Development, Arts & Entertainment Network, 555 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Eastern Europe: Breaking with the Past—*The Learning Channel, check local listings for dates and times.* This 13-part series explores the social, cultural, and political stories behind the headlines.

Tales from the Whoop: Hot Rod Brown, Classic Clown—*Nickelodeon, check local listings for dates and times.* Whoopi Goldberg helps a class clown learn to take school seriously.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, *a clearinghouse for children's TV and radio.*

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It all starts with IBM's acclaimed Writing to Read™ program*. It's a self-paced, interactive program that teaches kindergartners and first graders how to write anything they can say and read anything they can write.

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IBM offers courseware programs for students from kindergarten through high school—courseware that complements the curricula and textbooks you're currently using.

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RATING THE SCHOOLS

LISTEN TO THE PUBLIC

In poll after poll, Americans say public education is what they value most highly. What does this mean for schools?

Poll results can be misleading, even contradictory, but there's an unmistakable message the public sends when polled about their schools. Consider these results:

► If the federal budget has to be cut, say 83 percent of those surveyed, cut defense spending, not public education. (Louis Harris and Associates, August 1989)

► Don't shortchange public school funding to hold down the federal deficit, say 86 percent of respondents. (*New York Times*, June 1990)

► If a peace dividend frees up money for national spending, more respondents (24 percent) want it spent on public education than on any other option. (ABC/*Washington Post*, January 1990)

► Most parents (61 percent) think public schools are doing an excellent or good job. (Associated Press/Media General, May 1989.)

Given findings like these, it's hardly surprising to see politicians with a finger to the wind jumping on education's bandwagon. So can we finally forget the crisis in confidence ushered in by the 1983 *Nation At Risk* report?

Not quite yet. Consider the Associated Press/Media General finding that 43 percent of the public rate schools only "fair" or "poor."

That finding may explain the public's desire for accountability and receptivity to ideas like choice, increases in standardized testing, and site-based decision making, notes Ron Henderson, acting director of NEA Research.

But remember, Henderson cautions: "To a great extent, the public wants schools to do everything—educate children and prepare them for jobs, solve discipline problems, make the nation more economically competitive, and take on a wide variety of social ills." Some disappointment may be inevitable.

"Our own findings show that the more familiar people are with their schools, the greater their respect is for them," explains Stanley Elam, who coordinates the *Phi Delta Kappan* polling program.

The public is a lot more satisfied with the nation's teachers than with the nation's schools, Henderson points out. And recent improvements in compensation haven't lessened the public's belief that teachers need to be paid more.

It's not surprising, then, that state and local Associations have made surveying the public part of their agenda.

► The Connecticut Education Association conducted public opinion surveys to verify support for binding arbitration.

► The Indiana State Teachers Association used polling data to garner funding to reduce class size.

So listen to the public: Americans value education highly. Involve them in education more fully, and they'll become an even more valuable resource than they already are.

—Vicky Lytle

PHI DELTA KAPPAN/GALLUP POLLS

Annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools

Ratings Given the Local Public Schools

	A&B	A	B	C	D	F	D.K.
1990	41%	8%	33%	34%	12%	5%	8%
1989	43	8	35	33	11	4	9
1988	40	9	31	34	10	4	12
1987	43	12	31	30	9	4	14
1986	41	11	30	28	11	5	15
1985	43	9	34	30	10	4	13
1984	42	10	32	35	11	4	8
1983	31	6	25	32	13	7	17
1982	37	8	29	33	14	5	11
1981	36	9	27	34	13	7	10
1980	35	10	25	29	12	6	18

Where should most of the additional money come from?

TAXES	ALL	PARENTS
Federal	32%	30%
State	41	42
Local	17	19
D.K.	11	9

AP/Media General

How would you rate the job public schools in your community do at teaching students how to think and reason?

RATING	ALL	PARENTS
Excellent	7%	11%
Good	32	40
Only fair	35	30
Poor	19	18
D.K.	7	2

AP/Media General

Do you think the public schools in your community make subjects interesting for students?

RATING	ALL	PARENTS
Yes	51%	66%
No	29	24
D.K.	21	10

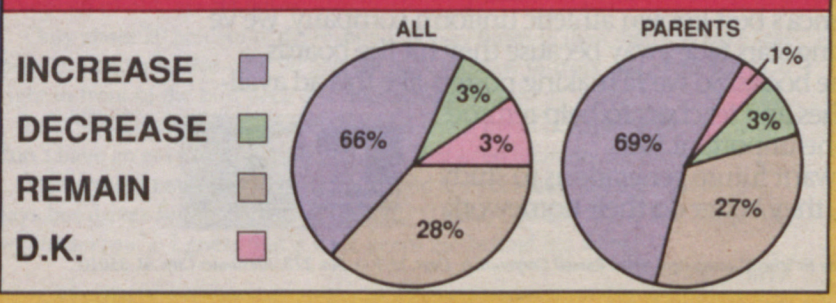
AP/Media General

How would you rate the job public schools in your community do at teaching students basic facts and skills?

RATING	ALL	PARENTS
Excellent	12%	21%
Good	40	41
Only fair	31	25
Poor	13	13
D.K.	5	1

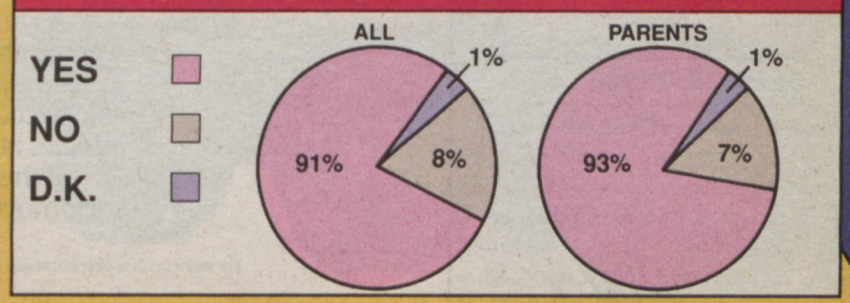
AP/Media General

Do you think spending on public schools should ...



AP/Media General

For those who said "increase": Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for that?



RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

LANGUAGE ARTS

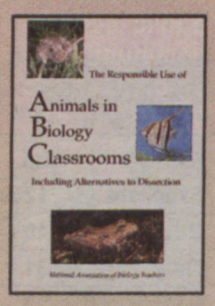
Workshop 2 by and for teachers: Beyond the Basal. Edited by Nancie Atwell. The second annual for teachers in grades K-8, who share descriptions of their students' encounters with literature. 135 pp. $10 plus $2.50 p&h. Heinemann Educational Books, 361 Hanover St., Portsmouth, NH 03801-3959.

PEDAGOGY

How To Write Tests for Students. Patrick W. Miller and Harley E. Erickson. Tells how to make up, give, and grade tests that are clear, bias-free, fair, and meaningful. 96 pp. Stock no. 3008-7-00-FF. $10.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06515

SCIENCE/ETHICS

The Animal Rights Handbook: Everyday Ways To Save Animal Lives. Sponsored by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—celebrating its 125th anniversary—the book offers specific advice on how to save animal lives in simple everyday ways. Living Planet Press. 114 pp. $4.95. From booksellers.



The Responsible Use of Animals in the Classroom—Including Alternatives to Dissection. National Association of Biology Teachers. Explores animal experimentation/dissection issues and suggests lessons that will reduce or eliminate the need for dissection in biology classes. 146 pp. $15; $12 NABT members. Add $2 p&h. National Association of Biology Teachers, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., #19, Reston, VA 22090.

CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

America's Children: Mixed Prospects. Suzanne M. Bianchi. A Census Bureau demographer presents the evidence for why "the prospects of U.S. children are uneven and uncertain." 43 pp. *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 45, no. 1. Single issue, $8 prepaid. Circulation Dept., Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005.

READING

Magazines for Children. Donald R. Stoll, editor. Educational Press Association of America and International Reading Association. A bibliography of more than 125 of the best U.S. children's magazines. 48 pp. $5.25 prepaid. Order Dept., International Reading Association, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139.

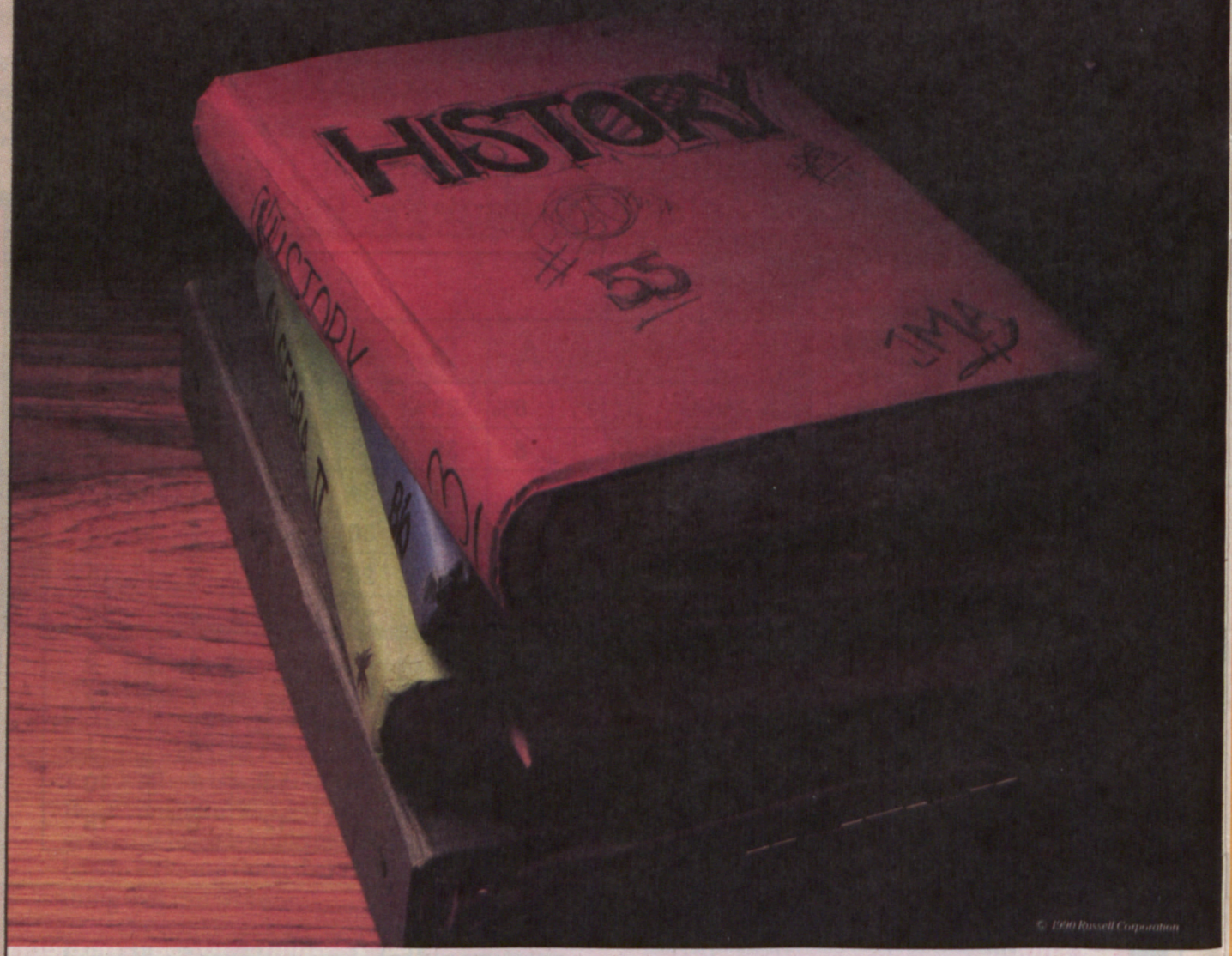
WRITING

Blazing Pencils: A Guide to Writing Fiction and Essays. Meredith Sue Willis. A self-guided manual for learning to write fiction and essays, written especially for junior high but adaptable for all grade levels. 129 pp., plus 48-page blank *Writing Notebook*. $9.95. Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003.

COUNSELING

The Black College Career Guide. An overview of nearly 100 historical and predominantly Black colleges. 64 pp. $4.50 postpaid. Career Discovery Center, Massey-Young Communications, 1150 W. Eighth St., Cincinnati, OH 45203.

Today's student athlete has one choice. Study history. Or be history.



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As America's best known athletic uniform company, we've seen promising stars fade away because they hit the boards instead of the books. So we're making posters like this ad available to coaches and teachers to help remind athletes of one important fact.

If they want future generations to study their moves, they better do their homework.

RUSSELL ATHLETIC
WORN BY AMERICA'S TOP TEAMS
42

For more information about our "Stay In School" campaign, write: Russell Corporation, Dept. M, P.O. Box 272, Alexander City, AL 35010.

TRANSPORTATION WORKERS

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Teamwork. It keeps school buses running and gets children to school on time. But in Richmond, Virginia, it's doing much more.

In a large room at the Richmond School District Bus Compound, a small group of transportation workers gather. After exchanging a few pleasantries, the colleagues get serious as the conversation switches from safety issues to policy guidelines to public awareness of traffic safety. Twice a month, for a few hours at a time, these workers get down to business—the business of education reform.

The nine workers are members of the Richmond Education Association's TABS (Team Approach to Better Schools) project, designed to give transportation workers a say in the decisions that affect their work.

Stuart Wagner

Gracie Boderick

They're part of an NEA TABS network that includes dozens of schools all across the United States. All TABS participants receive special training.

Elected by their peers, the TABS team in Richmond represents the district's 190 bus drivers, bus aides, and mechanics. They meet regularly to discuss colleagues' concerns and develop strategies for creating a transportation system better able to address the schools' needs and workers' concerns.

"In the past, drivers didn't seem to have actual input on transportation issues," says Timothy Grantham, a school bus driver for five years and a member of the TABS team. "Yet we're a crucial part of the educational system. We're on the front line: we're the first school people the children see after they leave home in the morning. We're very serious about our responsibilities in handling this very precious cargo—that makes it exciting to be part of the structural changes."

Last year—their first as a working TABS team—the REA members decided that fair treatment in disciplinary action was a high-priority goal. So they tackled a complete revision of the district's transportation workers' manual, comparing it with the policy guidelines for public service employees. When Virginia passed a law strictly limiting the use of corporal punishment, the TABS team made sure compliance guidelines were included in the manual. Somehow, they also found time to gather support for an eight-hour work day for transportation workers, survey their colleagues, and present their findings to the district superintendent.

"The word has spread among drivers, aides, and mechanics that we're an effective team," says Gracie Boderick, head of the TABS team, and a Richmond bus driver for 12 years, "not just a rubber stamp of management orders."

It wasn't always that easy, says Valerie Gentry. "We came into the project very green," says Gentry. "We had to build trust and learn to respect and communicate with one another. Learning to work through consensus meant learning to grow strong as a team and hold firm with one another. After that, we had to establish communication with management."

That was a valuable experience, notes Grantham. "Learning to work as a team gave us the skills to define the problems, identify the solutions, and work together to build a better system. In the process, we've shown that we're professionals who deserve respect."

For garage mechanic Freddie Smith, participating in the TABS project has meant an opportunity for voicing the concerns of his colleagues to both drivers and management. "For the first time, I can help make changes. I can talk about safety issues, structural issues, and issues that we as mechanics can identify that drivers may not see. When there's something wrong with the bus, the drivers come to me and I work hard to fix it. It's the same way now with the TABS team. When there's something wrong with the system, our colleagues come to us to fix it."

Stuart Wagner

Richmond bus mechanic Freddie Smith says teamwork is the key to success.

"With the training we've gotten, we can even go to the City Council, articulate our concerns, and show them we mean business," says Gracie Boderick. "And our colleagues know that even though we have to put up with a lot in the process, we'll hammer and hammer 'til we get it done, together. In this second year of our project, we know this teamwork will move us even further along."

—Anita Merina

Transportation Workers: Who They Are, What They Say

Transportation workers are experienced, they're concerned about safety, about job security, and about respect—and they're determined to stick to their field because they like working with children. That's the picture that emerged when hundreds of bus drivers, bus aides, and mechanics answered a survey printed in *ESP Progress*, NEA's newsletter for support staff members. More than 55 percent say they've worked for more than 10 years, and barely 20 percent have worked for five years or less. Most—75 percent—are women. Some mechanics also drive buses—and some drivers also serve as mechanics.

A few bus drivers work as little as six hours a week, but most spend between 20 and 40 hours on the road. The usual work year is about the same as the school year. Some three fourths of transportation workers are guaranteed a certain number of hours' work each day.

Most of the drivers and aides who wrote in are on rural (over 45 percent) or suburban (over 35 percent) routes. Almost half have kept the same route for several years, but nearly as many say routes are reassigned every year.

More than half the transportation workers (55 percent) make over $9 an hour. Another 31 percent make between $7 and $9. About 15 percent are paid by the trip.

Contracting out has become a problem for almost half the people who answered the survey. Denise Hacker of Fairless Hills, Pa., writes that her state uses taxpayers' money to subsidize subcontracting—so it's cheaper for local school districts to contract out transportation services than to provide them internally.

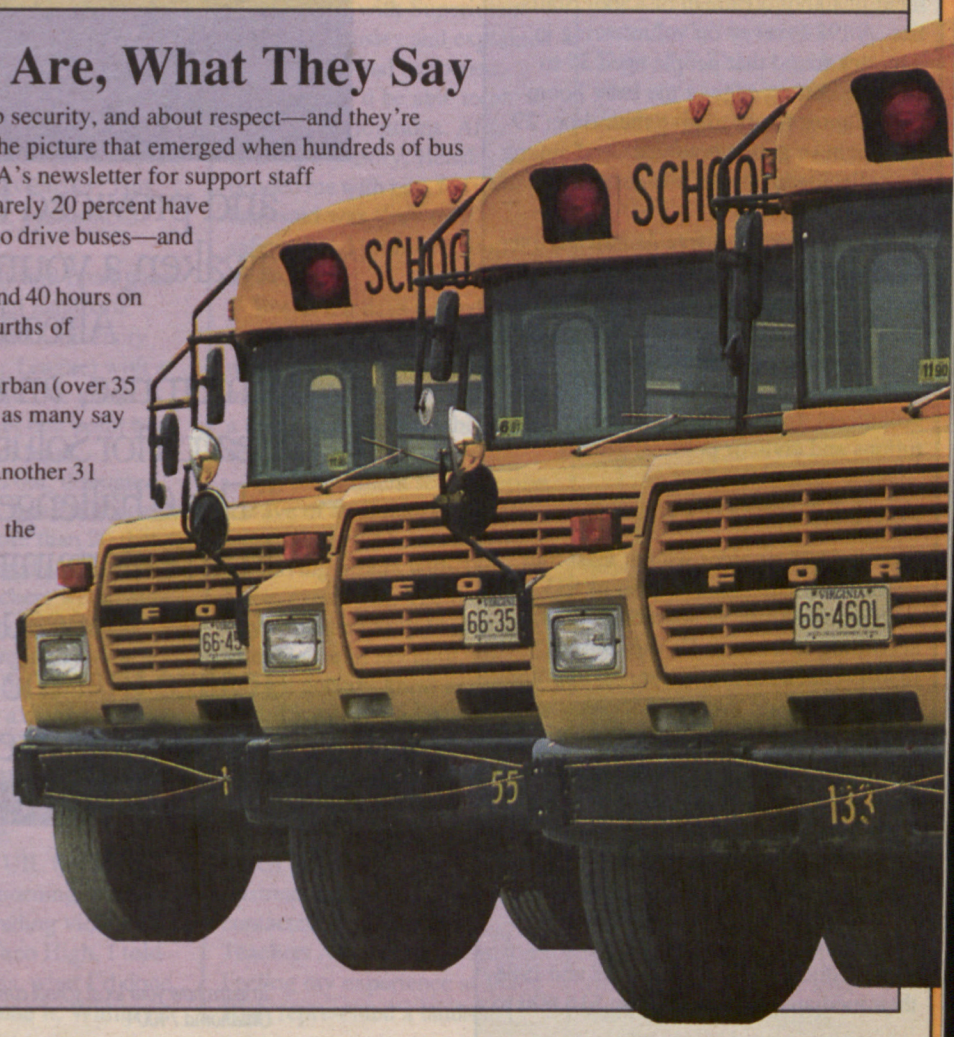
What are the worst safety problems? Increased stress, say nearly three fourths of respondents, while half cite worsening road conditions. About one in five complain of old, unsafe buses.

Only about 20 percent of the respondents say buses in their districts have seat belts for students. But over 90 percent have the new mirrors that show the road right in front of the bus, once a serious danger point.

Low pay, subcontracting, and growing stress mean transportation workers don't have an easy life. It's other factors that keep them on the job.

"This year I made less than last year, and last year less than the year before," says bus driver Judith Trebec of Tucson. "Thank God for all the *Bye, Judy, see you tomorrow*'s. I guess that's what keeps me behind the wheel."

—Jane Power



TRENDS

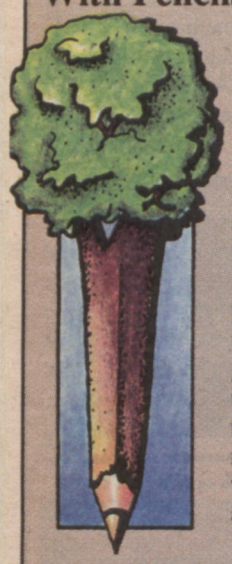
The Feminine Mystique

When women talk, very young students listen.

So say Florida State University researchers after finding that second graders who'd seen a film narrated by a woman remembered more about it than those who'd seen the same film narrated by a man. The narrator's gender had no effect on fifth graders' recall of the same material.

The researchers think the second graders may be more attuned to female voices than to male ones "because the care, supervision, and guidance of this age group is provided primarily by women."

Making the Point With Pencils



Heeding environmentalists' concern for tropical rain forests, some major pencil manufacturers are pledging not to use rain-forest wood in their products.

Instead, the companies have agreed to use only American-grown incense cedar in their pencils. Look for the message "contains no tropical rain-forest wood" on pencil packages this fall.

More Than Just Arugula

The life of the yuppie—the college-educated baby boomer—isn't all fitness and fancy cars, reports the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. A 1989 survey on volunteering in America found that people aged 35 to 44—the cutting edge of the baby boom—are the most likely to give their time: 29 percent have gotten involved. And among the college-educated of all ages, two out of five donate time.

Overall, one out of five Americans over 15 years old—almost 40 million of us—volunteers some time sometimes. Volunteers average a little more than four hours a week, every other week.

Religious organizations attract the most volunteers, followed by educational institutions and civic or political groups.

And Miles To Go

Men aged 25 or older with at least four years of college had a median of $35,700 cash income from all sources in 1988, according to a recent Census Bureau report. That's not much more (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than the $35,300 they had in 1968. Still, the college grads did better than their peers who left school after 12th grade: *their* median income plunged from $24,300 to $21,200.

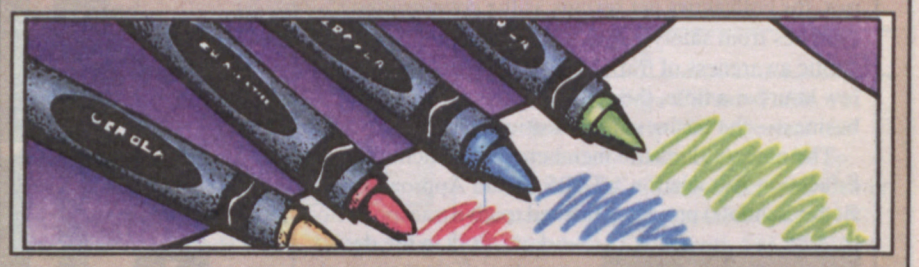
Women made more headway. The college grads kept on closing the traditional income gap between themselves and men (at least the men with just 12 years' education): between 1968 and 1988 their median income rose from $16,600 to $20,500. Meanwhile, women high school graduates also improved their income, from a median of $9,600 to $9,700.

Color Me Cerulean

Just when you thought some things were safe from change, here's someone meddling with the 64 Crayola crayon colors. Even, for the first time ever, scribbling some out altogether.

Fortunately, the changes aren't too radical. Maize has been replaced with dandelion. Green blue has given way to cerulean. In all, eight colors were retired, replaced by brighter, lusher ones.

"We found the new colors are consistent with today's children's fashions, with the advertisements they see on TV," explains Brad Drexler of Crayola-maker Binney & Smith.



When we are very young, we are possessors of a splendid gift: a mind that knows no limits.

Faced with a new experience, it allows us to make discoveries, gain insights – and, with time, learn something more of the world around us.

And, if we're truly fortunate, we'll never completely let go of the early innocence that keeps us forever open to new ideas.

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PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY PHILLIPS 66

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SOUNDING BOARD

The High Price of Honesty

Waco, Texas, sociology teacher Sue Collins took her district and her superintendent and principal to court. The issue was how she was treated after refusing to change a grade for a football player. For her high principles Collins was suspended, then reassigned to a less attractive position. But because her case had the potential for setting a precedent, the Texas State Teachers Association took it on under the Unified Legal Services Program, jointly funded by NEA and the state Associations. This is Collins' story (adapted from the September 1990 issue of Working Mother magazine). It begins in the fall of 1987 as she began her 10th year at Waco High School.

Richard Myers

Sue Collins reflects on the turmoil she went through after refusing to change a high school football player's grade.

In 1985, Waco High fused with another high school, causing a buzz of excitement over the powerhouse football team we were going to have. The dream of winning the championship was an undercurrent to daily activities.

"Let's get the whole school working as a team!" our new principal, Dr. Wilbur "Butch" Luce, urged at a teachers' meeting in the early fall of 1987. "Let's really help these kids out! We'd hate to see a kid knocked out of an activity or kept out of a playoff game just because of a grade."

Luce was referring to the controversial "no-pass, no-play" law adopted by the Texas legislature in 1984. The law prohibits students with an average below 70 percent in any course at the end of a six-week grading period from participating in extracurricular activities, including sports and speech, during the next grading period.

That semester, one of my students was in academic trouble from the start. Trell Payne was also a defensive tackle on the football team. He came to class regularly and seemed to be paying attention, but didn't always turn in assignments, or turned them in half-completed. When, at the end of three weeks, Trell's class work was failing, I dropped a note to his coach, Johnny Tusa, to warn him of Trell's situation.

Coach Tusa thanked me and said he'd talk to Trell. I looked forward to seeing Trell's performance improve, but that never happened. At the end of the six-week grading period, his class average was 55 percent.

The day Coach Tusa found my second notice in his box, he came by for another visit. "So," he said, shaking his head, "what are we going to do?"

"There's nothing *to* do. Look at this!" I pointed to my grade book: "Trell is failing."

"Well, there *are* some things we can do," Coach Tusa explained. "There's something called point borrowing. Trell needs 15 or 16 points to pass, so what we can do is borrow those points from the next six weeks, and at the end of the grading period we'll subtract the borrowed points."

In 10 years of teaching at Waco High I'd never heard of point borrowing. The idea seemed ludicrous. "It isn't fair!" I protested.

"You aren't going to do this for Trell or for me," said the coach. "You're going to do it for the school—for the team!"

After class I walked down to the registrar's office and asked for my grade sheets back. I put a red slash through Trell's failing grade and wrote 70 percent over it. Then I called Coach Tusa at the field house and said, "I changed his grade. But I want you to know how unfair I think this is to all the other students."

That night I told my husband, Ray, who coached at another school: "The principal is in on it, too. This afternoon I saw him talking openly with the coach about point borrowing."

"If that's so, it must be OK," Ray reasoned. "There are a lot of statewide rules regarding grading systems, and some are complicated. Let me get hold of the handbook so we can check for ourselves."

Meanwhile, I reminded Trell daily of assignments and encouraged him to come in for one-on-one tutoring, but he ignored my efforts to help. His average grade for the second six weeks was 60 percent. I deducted the borrowed 15 points from that and turned in 45 percent as his final grade. Then I began preparing myself for the inevitable showdown with Coach Tusa.

Sure enough, Tusa confronted me again, and we replayed the scene that had taken place six weeks earlier. This time, however, I refused to cooperate.

By now Ray and I had gone over the official handbook (compiled by the University Interscholastic League) with a fine-tooth comb. We knew without a doubt that point borrowing was not legal.

I also found out, through another coach, that Trell's grade was one of more than 20 that had been changed at Waco High that year. Teachers were being pressured by both Tusa and Luce into changing grades. It wasn't fair to the athletes who were learning a distorted value system, and it wasn't fair to the students who studied for hours to pass legitimately. Something had to be done.

I called the UIL first thing that Monday morning to inform them of the grading violations going on at Waco High. I told them who I was, what I'd done, and why I'd done it. Within hours, a UIL investigator arrived at the school. By afternoon, Waco High had been knocked out of the playoffs. Every game in which Trell had played was forfeited. The news made headlines across the state.

The following evening, Dr. Luce called me at home. "*My* superintendent wants to see you," he said, with anger in his voice. I met with Superintendent Jim Hensley and explained to him what had happened, believing he'd be able to put a stop to the violations. After hearing my story, Hensley suspended me with pay, for what he later said was "my own safety," and promised to investigate.

But as the days passed, I realized that the suspension had nothing to do with concern for my personal safety. I'd become a thorn in the side of the Waco school system.

My banishment set in motion a wave of speculation. People were saying I'd been suspended for having affairs with Tusa, Luce, even Trell. The community considered my suspension as evidence of *my* guilt, although nobody knew exactly what I was accused of.

Although suspended, I was still expected to plan lessons and grade papers for my classes, which were being taught by a coach. I knew I was being mistreated and needed help, so I contacted the Texas State Teachers Association in Austin. Feeling my experience at Waco High represented a landmark case, the Association offered free legal counsel.

My attorney, Katherine Moore, took action immediately, writing to the school district that if I weren't reinstated, I'd sue Dr. Luce, Superintendent Hensley, and the school board for violating my First Amendment rights. She also cited violations of the Texas Whistleblower Act, which guarantees public employees the right to speak out, without retaliation, against something they feel is wrong.

The only response we received was a phone call reassigning me as of January 1988 to a smaller, less prestigious school to teach a subject, physical science, for which I was not certified.

Feeling as though I had no option, I filed the lawsuit. I agreed to take the new job, but only until we went to trial.

The trial lasted four agonizing days. The defense lawyers contended that I'd called in the UIL in order to get even with Tusa, who had jilted me romantically. They also said I'd involved Luce and Tusa in an effort to cover up my own decision to violate the "no-pass, no-play" law, and that I'd called the UIL only when I became afraid of discovery. My own testimony lasted for three hours. I did my best to make the truth sound as believable as the defendants' lies. After deliberating for several hours, the jury came back "In favor of the Plaintiff." They awarded me a total of $77,000 in punitive damages, about evenly split among the superintendent, principal, and school board.

The defendants asked for a retrial, saying they hadn't had enough time to present their case. They threatened to tie the battle in legal knots for years—unless I accepted an immediate settlement of $55,000. In return, I was to agree not to work in the Waco school district.

I can't put my family through this hell all over again, I thought. So I agreed to settle.

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Update. This fall ***NEA Today*** *found an enthusiastic Sue Collins teaching science and sponsoring the drill team and cheerleaders at Royse City Middle School outside Dallas. "Royse City TSTA asked me to speak on behalf of the Association as school opened. I appreciated the opportunity," she says. "I hadn't done that before."*

IDEA EXCHANGE

The Students' Tale

When her high school seniors finish reading *The Canterbury Tales*, Grass Range, Mont., teacher Julie Lewis uses the structure of Chaucer's classic to boost kids' comprehension and hone their writing skills at the same time.

First the students compile a list of some 30 types of people, representing a microcosm of society today. Then each kid writes a tale about one of those persons, using the same style Chaucer did in presenting his Canterbury pilgrims.

Last year, says Lewis, she wrote a tale along with her students. Not only did she feel a need to write "The Teacher's Tale" because no student had ever done so, but she wanted her students to see her struggle through a writing project—from rough draft to final product.

Parent Conferences: The E's Have It

School psychologist Charles Jaynes, who works in the Jamestown, N.Y., schools, says teachers' meetings with parents of difficult students are more productive when teachers follow the four *E*'s. Specifically, he advises—

- **Empathize.** Begin the conference by asking the parents their opinion of the child and the present situation. You'll quickly get an impression of their attitude and level of awareness. Once rapport is established, try to assume the parents' point of view while explaining your own.
- **Encourage.** Openly encourage yourself, the parents, and the child. Speak in a positive, uplifting tone of voice.
- **Educate.** Instruct the parents about the educational process, child development, and problem solving. Be prepared to present your ideas on what needs to be done to solve the problem. Use your skills in developing goals, objectives, criteria, and methods. But stay open to the parents' ideas and try to incorporate them in a jointly developed plan of action.
- **Empower.** Often problems persist because parents feel unable to implement a plan or change their child's behavior. Sometimes the parents feel unable to change their own behavior, beliefs, or attitudes. Convince the parents that they have the means and opportunity to change or improve the situation.

Clean Reading

Linda Risner's fifth graders at Fred J. Hums Elementary School in Mishawaka, Ind., love to relax in the tub—right in the classroom. The huge antique cast-iron tub, painted bright yellow and filled with fluffy pillows, dominates the reading corner. Above the tub a sign reads, "Rub-a-dub-dub, read a book in the tub." Risner rewards her students for doing good work by giving them "tickets"—actually small bars of soap—good for 15 minutes of reading time in the tub. The kids can read their own book or choose from among a selection of paperbacks, library books, and stories written by their classmates.

Visitors—including school cooks enlisted by Risner—who stop by to read to the kids also make themselves comfortable in the tub. And when three or four kids study vocabulary together, they do their lessons in the tub.

"When I read for pleasure, I don't like to sit in a straight-backed chair," says Risner, "so I decided to give my students a comfortable place to read, too."

Read, Show & Tell

To help her first graders at Holt Elementary School make sure they understand what they read, Goldstone, Mo., teacher Sandie Spoon has the members of each reading group discuss their favorite parts of a story that all have read. Each youngster then draws an illustration of the part he or she presented, with a sentence of explanation underneath.

The next day, Spoon makes a book out of all the pictures and captions. The children read this book in class and take turns sharing it with their families. Later, the volume is left out in the classroom for anyone to read and enjoy.

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

In Michigan

Trading Places

A unique program unites school and university faculty in their roles as thinkers, researchers, professors, and teachers.

How's this for a role reversal? Classroom teachers teaching undergraduate education majors, and college faculty teaching K-12 students? That's what the Michigan Partnership for New Education is doing. In the process, the Partnership brings together public and private sector funding, unites education research and practice, and adds practical training to teacher education. All for a new bottom line: teaching students to be critical thinkers.

It's collaboration on an unprecedented scale.

Now in its third year, the five-year, $48 million effort involves 130 teachers at seven public schools, 40 faculty members from three area universities, plus dozens of student teachers and graduate students, and hundreds of K-12 students.

Teachers at Elliott Elementary in Holt, Mich., voted unanimously to join the Partnership a few years ago, and—like each of the other schools involved—to become a "professional development school." Or, as the Partnership's Executive Director and Michigan State University's Dean of Education Judith Lanier says, "a place for research, demonstration, teacher education and preparation."

That's turned 20-year veteran and third grade teacher Carol Ligett's career upside down. Last year, Ligett was released from her class for three afternoons a week—one to do reading suggested by university colleagues (and discussed in study groups after school), and two to co-teach a class in social studies methods at Michigan State University.

"The college juniors I taught about fell off their seats when they heard that I'd been teaching for 20 years and was still interested in it," Ligett says. "I think they respected me because of my practical experience, and I think I eased their fears about things like classroom management and discipline."

But the learning went both ways. Ligett planned a curriculum right alongside the prospective teachers, did a lot of background reading, and probably "learned more than I taught."

This year, Ligett—and two elementary colleagues—will teach in the mornings and be released in the afternoons to develop, implement, and study the impact of a new curriculum, "Literacy in Social Studies and Science." Two university professors will be deeply involved in the project with the teachers—as team teachers, observers, and researchers.

Another teacher in the project, Barbara Lindquist, a veteran fifth grade teacher at Elliott, says she's pleased the university faculty aren't "coming in and telling us what to do. They know we have a bank of information and experience that they don't have," she notes, "and they want to draw on that."

"I'm very excited about the project," Lindquist says. "I hope the research produces better ways to reach all kids, prompts a restructuring of the school day, and redefines what it means to teach. Teaching isn't just standing up in front of kids and giving them information," she continues. "Teachers need time to sit at their desks and think—that's also part of the job."

Other groups of Elliott teachers will research how to incorporate more critical thinking skills into math teaching, and how to improve the early childhood curriculum.

Teachers at the other six Partnership schools have crafted goals specific to their students' needs. They range from developing a multicultural orientation in teaching to the use of computers in writing instruction.

In each case, says Charles Thompson, MSU's associate dean for clinical studies, there's "a crossover and blending of roles between university and school faculty."

In the next five years, the Partnership plans to expand to 18-24 public school sites, to include at least four more universities, and to develop an information networking system for school employees statewide.

"This isn't an effort to cream the best teachers or the best students," Lanier asserts. "Rather we want to take ordinary places and see if we can't do extraordinary things."

— Stefanie Weiss

Working as a team to improve instruction at Elliott Elementary in Holt, Michigan, are: (front row, left to right) graduate student Corinna Hasbach, teacher Elaine Hoekwater, teacher Barbara Lindquist, teacher Carol Ligett, graduate assistant Constanza Hazelwood, and (back row, left to right) Michigan State University professors Kathy Roth and Cheryl Rosaen.

Terry Clark

Short Takes on Change

Rating Reform

What do today's teachers think of school reform? Not much, says the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Carnegie asked public school educators around the country to grade school reform. Only 18 percent gave reform a thumbs up rating while 54 percent gave school reform a C. The reason? Teachers are still bypassed in a process created to give them more control over classrooms and curriculum.

Where are teachers happy? In the south, especially in South Carolina and Mississippi, where teachers say they're very pleased with reform efforts.

Braking Change

Educators at Parkway South High School in Manchester, Mo., thought they were making a good school even better.

But for a while, they felt like the bad guys.

Inspired by their success as part of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Parkway educators decided to forge ahead with more cutting edge ideas.

But some Parkway parents thought the staff was experimenting on their children and tampering with a school that was already successful.

The controversy, reported at length in *Education Week*, has since cooled. A committee of parents, teachers, administrators, and others, meet regularly to make sure all parties are kept informed.

The lesson learned: don't get so far ahead you've left your community behind.

Disney Salute

Watch for "Disney's American Teacher Awards," on TV this fall. The special honors 36 teachers chosen from the 65 winners of the 1989 and 1990 Disney Salute to the American Teacher Competition, many of them NEA members.

The broadcast, airing November 4 and December 1, offers film clips of the teachers and their students, as well as celebrities and politicians. One teacher, chosen by all 65 educators, will also be honored for special contributions to education.

Ahead of Its Time

As states continue to look at setting up professional standards board, Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

For its first 20 years, the Oregon Commission stood alone as the first —and only—teacher majority, autonomous standards board in the nation. Even today, Nevada and Kentucky are the only other states to share this distinction.

Birthday festivities include a reunion of the original commissioners—many of them NEA members—and NEA staff to salute their pioneering efforts.

Breaking Barriers

By the year 2020, more than half the student population will be from racial and ethnic minorities. By then, women and minority men will also constitute more than 85 percent of the the workforce.

So why are these same groups noticeably absent from today's reform efforts?

NEA's Instruction and Professional Development unit aims to boost minority involvement by publicizing exemplary programs (and training others to duplicate these efforts), and by removing barriers to minority participation. All of this information will go into a publication that's based on interviews with teachers, counselors, and researchers.

—Anita Merina

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For applications and information on any of these programs, please complete and return the attached reply card, or call the NEA Special Services Response Center toll free at **1-800-637-4636.** Be sure to give the Member Services Representative who answers your call this special code: UMB100.

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People

Star Light, Star Bright, Ask a Star To Read Tonight

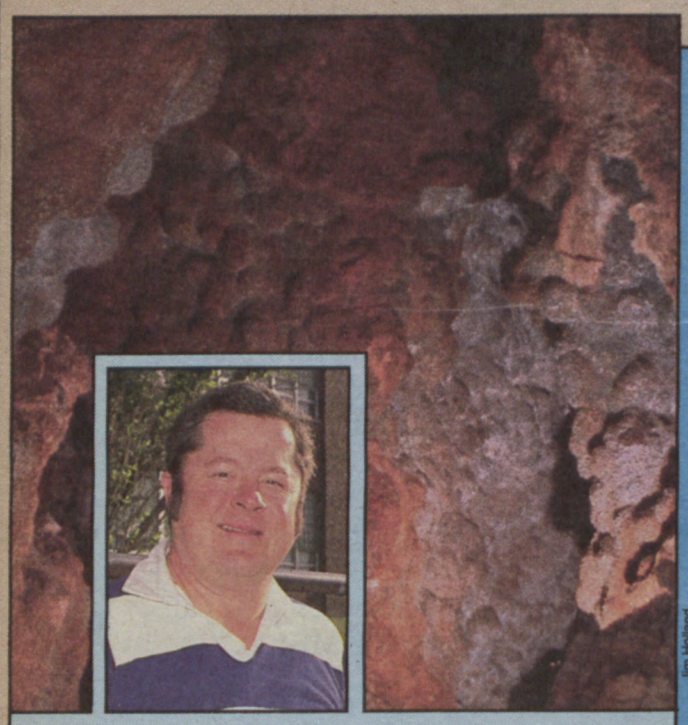
One evening last April—dubbed the Night of a Thousand Stars by the American Library Association/American Association of School Librarians—libraries across the nation proudly hosted famous people (like actor Beau Bridges, singer Aretha Franklin, and heavyweight champ Buster Douglas) who came to to read aloud to children. Purpose of the Night: to encourage family reading.

In Denver, an especially enthusiastic group of NEA members—they'd gotten the NEA's formal backing for the Night—worked on the project in the Aurora and Jefferson County school districts.

"We tended to enlist local notables," explains **Carole Wright**, a Chapter 1 reading specialist from Aurora. "We saw a chance to build up a sense of community." Members of the Denver group shown at right: *clockwise from left,* Betty Flaten, media specialist, Jefferson County; Carole Wright; Bill Murray, director of media services, Aurora; Barbara Higgins, media specialist, Aurora.

Night of a Thousand Stars II is scheduled for April 17, 1991. Watch *NEA Today* for more information.

Lisa Griffin



Jim Holland

'Cave Man' Of South Dakota

To illustrate the meaning of absolute darkness, science teacher and part-time park ranger **Bruce Bitz** regularly turns off all the lights in Jewel Cave, deep in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. "If it's this dark in here in the daytime," said one visitor, taken aback, "imagine what it's like at night."

Bitz chuckles at the memory. For nearly 20 years, he's spent his summers as a park ranger leading tours through Jewel Cave National Monument, the second largest cave in the country, with 82 miles of passageways discovered to date. Geologists say up to 1,500 miles more are waiting to be discovered.

During the school year, Bitz uses the cave as a classroom. Donning an explorer's hat, he takes his students "spelunking"—a term he defines professorially as "a combination of *spelaion*, which is Greek for cave, and *lunking*, which is the sound your head makes when it hits the cave wall."

Jumping Through Hoops for Physical Education

National Physical Educator of the Year **Jean Flemion** of Thousand Oaks, Calif., describes himself as a "born again" member of his profession. Once a practitioner who accepted the view that p.e. properly concentrates on athletic achievers, Flemion—together with his colleagues at Arthur B. Wright Middle School—now works to create a cooperative environment where all students can learn about themselves and their potential.

In volleyball, for example, Flemion's classes put more emphasis on the number of times *both* teams get the ball over the net than on the points scored by either one. And to increase activity and lessen anxiety, kids learn how three or four of them can play games that traditionally require 20.

The emphasis is on the extraordinary. Flemion's circus unit, for example, is required of all sixth graders. Here the kids learn to juggle, do acrobatics, ride a unicycle. With practice, they can become part of a circus demonstration and perform in the community.

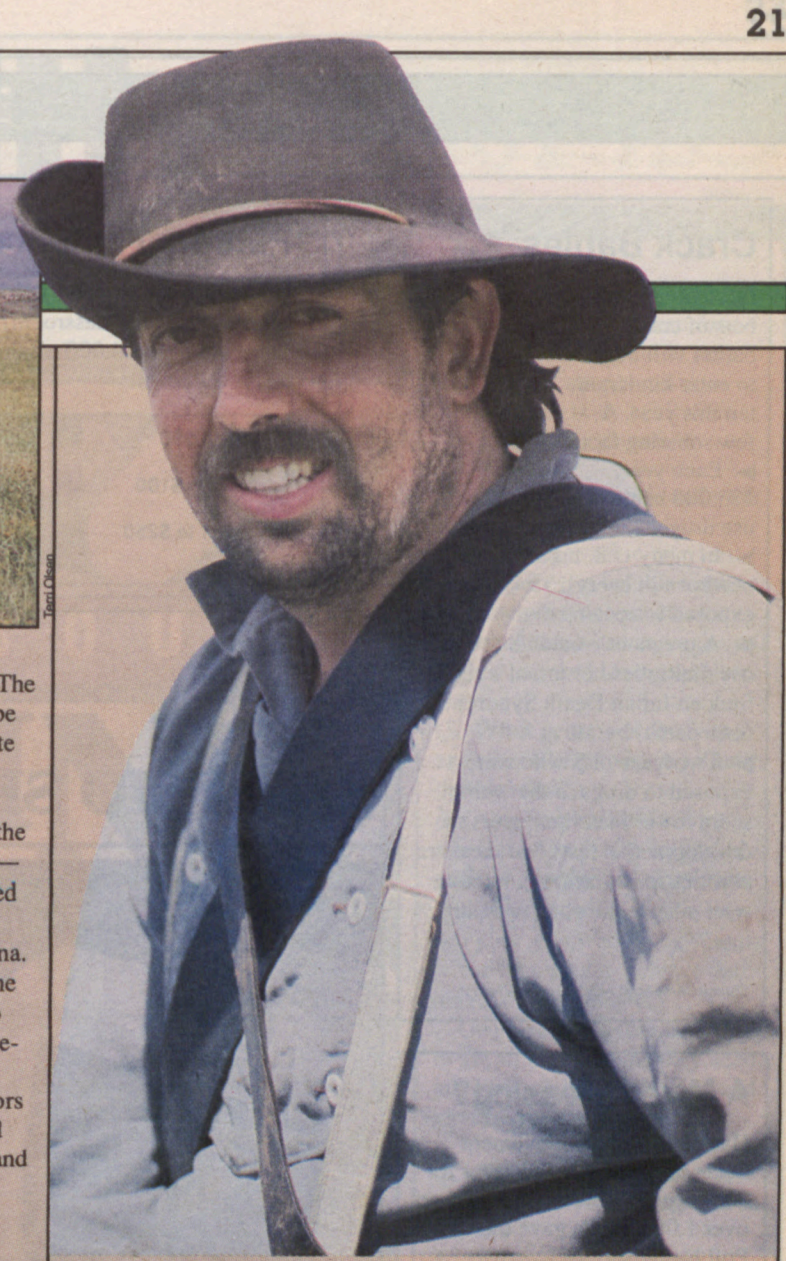
Families are important in Flemion's work, too. Twice-monthly "Mind and Muscle" homework assignments include sun-safe, low-stress, and nonfat weekends, with extra credit for students who get their families in on the projects.

Twice a year, Flemion organizes a Family Sports Night, featuring a family basket dinner, a demonstration of student warm-up exercises, and physical challenges to family members—including grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Home-made medallions are awarded in the "All Thumbs," "Over the Hill," and "Die Hard" categories.

"When a kid tells me, 'Dad put Mom's medal on the wall,' I feel good," says Flemion. "The refrigerater door displays test papers and art work. Participation in physical education belongs up there, too."

Photographs by Bob Riha, Jr.

Terri Olsen



The Nine Lives of a Movie Extra

"Always die in the shade," says **Jim Cook**, Joplin (Missouri) High School history teacher, veteran of reenacted wars, and experienced movie extra. "When you get killed a lot, you learn. If you die in the sun, you could be lying there all day."

This past summer, Cook "died" about 15 yards behind General Custer in a TV movie called *Son of the Morning Star*, scheduled to air this winter. The film, which Cook says may be "the first historically accurate movie about Custer's last stand," stars Gary Cole and Rosanna Arquette. To shoot the climactic fight scenes, Cook—and dozens of other "glorified extras"—spent three weeks filming near Billings, Montana.

Sure, it's a good time, some extra money, and a chance to camp out. But Cook's involvement stems from his background—seven of his ancestors fought in the Civil War—and from his interests in history and education.

"It's real easy for me to explain to my students what happened historically when I've relived it," Cook says. "When you've worn wool clothes in August, you realize how hot it felt then.

"And when you've marched shoulder to shoulder a half-mile across, you understand why so many people died at the battle of Gettysburg," he explains.

In the past six years, Cook's become an old hand on the set. In addition to dozens of reenactments, he's worked on such movies as *North and South*, *Gettysburg*, and *Sam Houston, Legend of Texas*, plus several explicitly educational films.

Maria Stewart, National Geographic Society

Winning Geography's 'World Cup'

"In an entire teaching career, you'd never expect to have an opportunity as special as this," says an ecstatic **Dennis Bruno**, sixth grade gifted teacher at Washington-Jefferson School in Altoona, Pa. One of Bruno's students, Susannah Batko-Yovino, won the National Geographic Society's 1990 Geography Bee. Her prize: a $25,000 college scholarship.

Susannah was the only girl among the 10 finalists in the Bee, which was held in Washington in May. Of the 57 semifinalists, only seven were girls. Although Bruno was Susannah's teacher and coach, he takes little credit for her victory. "Susannah decided she was going to do it," Bruno says. "She has a good memory, and she studied hard. And her classmates helped—they made up more than 5,000 flashcard questions to help her prepare."

"I also played geography games," Susannah adds, "like 'Where in the World?' and 'Global Pursuit.'" All of which explains why Susannah knew on which continent Mt. Erebus is located—the answer that put her over the top.

Forward to the Past

Reprinted from *Country Home* magazine.

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To **Norma Jean** and **Carroll Swam**, renovating their home was a lesson in patience, hard work, and American history.

In 1969, the Swams bought the Red Brick Farm in Millers, Md. The 25-acre spread included an aging farmhouse and stone barn, both built around 1854.

Over the next 20 years, the Swams painstakingly returned the house to its 19th century character, using old photos and research to guide their restoration efforts.

"Over the years we traveled and went to museums and living history farms," says Norma Jean, a resource teacher for the Carroll County Schools. "We kept our eyes open, and we developed friendships with people doing similar work, sharing information and building tips."

Room by room, the Swams carefully peeled back wallpaper, removed modern fixtures, and restored original woodwork. "All the woodwork, the mantels, and 80 percent of the hardware are original," says Carroll, who teaches at Sparks Elementary School in Baltimore County.

If you want to restore your house, say the Swams, research is the key. "Visit museums, tour other houses in the area, track down old pictures of the house and the era in which it was built, then go to work," says Norma Jean.

Carroll's advice? "Have patience. Get your family involved: it helps when the house becomes the family project. And go slowly—let the house speak to you. You don't want to change too much unnecessarily."

"Above all," Swam concludes, "never make an irreversible change."

Hard-earned lessons from a couple of seasoned experts.

DATA BANK

Crack Babies

Increasing numbers of crack babies will begin to enter kindergarten this year. A few sobering facts:

▶ Each year, 375,000 babies are born to mothers who use drugs.

▶ In many U.S. urban areas, one newborn in every 10 has been exposed to cocaine in the womb.

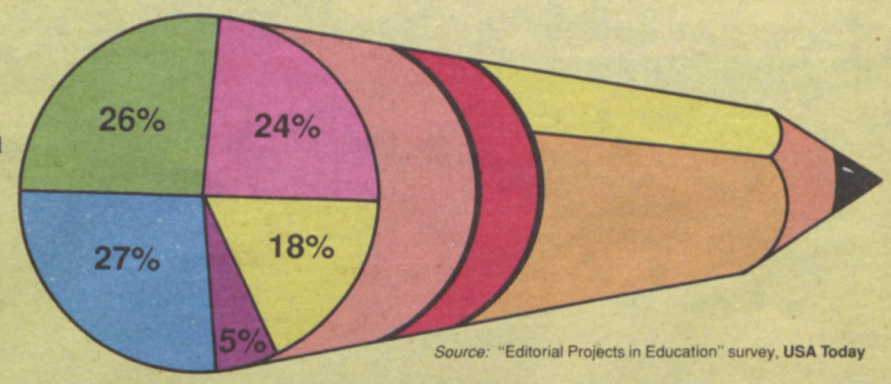
▶ A pregnant woman's cocaine use multiplies her infant's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (crib death) by 10.

▶ Two-year-olds who were exposed to drugs in the womb score lower than their peers on developmental tests that measure abilities to concentrate, interact with others, and cope with structure.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Personal Finance

How much money do you spend on supplies for your classroom? A recent survey of nearly 4,000 teachers showed this breakdown:



Source: "Editorial Projects in Education" survey, **USA Today**

A Mixed Blessing?

Has the women's movement made things easier or harder for Americans? Here are the answers over 1,000 adults gave the Gallup Poll News Service.

	Harder	Easier
▶ For women to lead satisfying lives	35%	56%
▶ For marriages to be successful	76	15
▶ For parents to raise children	82	14
▶ For families to earn a comfortable living	50	47
▶ For women to combine jobs and families	66	30

Source: U.S. News and World Report

50 Years of Change

Forget nuclear weapons, microwave ovens, and laptop computers. The past 50 years have seen tremendous growth in the use of a few older inventions.

	1940	1990
Telephones	41,100,000	151,000,000
Radio stations	862	8,942
Automobiles produced	2,975,165	7,110,728
Magazines	460	2,160
Divorces	250,000	1,190,000

Source: New York Times

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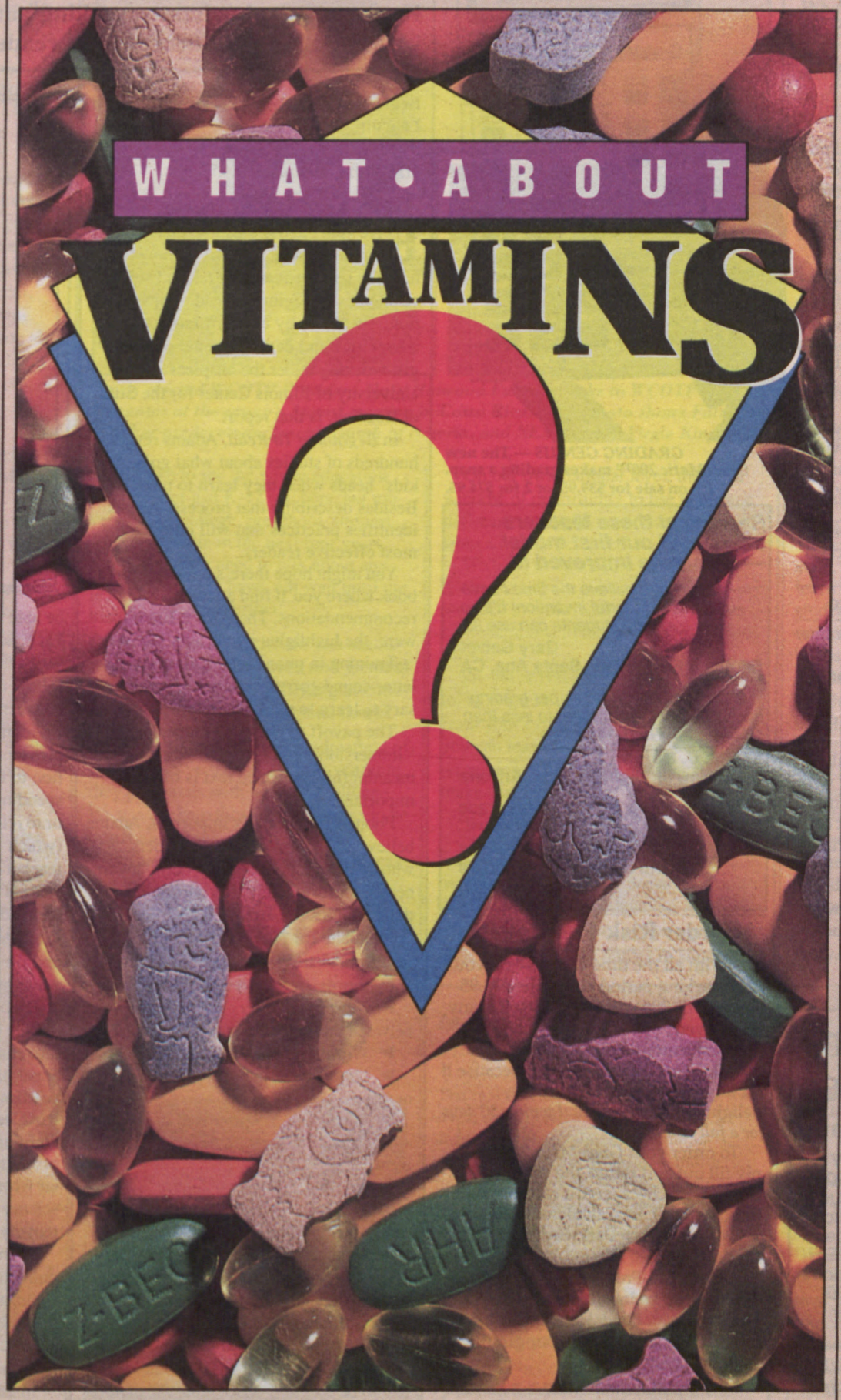
Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.

Ronald E. Kleinman, M.D., is an associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate chief, Children's Service, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. He is also clinical chief of the hospital's combined program in pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition. He serves as chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Nutrition.



Q. Do normal, healthy children need vitamin pills?
A. No, healthy children who eat a varied diet don't need extra vitamins. All babies receive a vitamin K supplement at birth. After that, babies who aren't breast-fed need a formula that's fortified with iron.

Q. What about popular multivitamins for kids? Should parents go ahead and give these to their kids just to be on the safe side?
A. That's really overkill. Children who eat balanced diets of fruits, vegetables, protein, cereals or bread, and dairy products fortified with vitamin D don't need any kind of supplemental vitamins.

Q. What are some of the myths about vitamins?
A. Some of the more common myths are that vitamins give extra protection against sickness, that vitamins can replace all the nutrients missing from a deficient diet, and that generic vitamins aren't as effective as premium-brand vitamins.

Q. None of that is true?
A. That's right. There's no evidence that vitamin pills can protect healthy people against sickness. For example, there's no proof that megadoses of vitamin C fight off colds.

Proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins are all necessary for growth and development. Vitamins alone can't substitute for the other necessary nutrients.

Finally, generic vitamins are every bit as good as premium brands.

Q. What's the difference between vitamins and minerals?
A. Minerals are naturally occurring elements, like calcium, iron, and zinc. Vitamins are chemical compounds that occur naturally in plants and animals, aren't produced by humans, and are essential for the body's metabolism.

Q. And the difference between fat-soluble and water-soluble vitamins?
A. Vitamins A, D, E, and K can be dissolved in fat, so they're called fat-soluble vitamins. The body stores up fat-soluble vitamins, so if a person gets more of them than he or she uses, they begin to accumulate. A deficiency of some of the fat-soluble vitamins can lead to poor eyesight, difficulty in blood clotting, poor bone growth, and poor intestinal functioning. A vitamin D deficiency causes rickets, for example, and a vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness.

Water-soluble vitamins include all the B vitamins and vitamin C. We need various B vitamins to prevent anemia, to keep the nervous system functioning normally, and to help make bones strong and skin healthy. The body can't store water-soluble vitamins.

Q. Is it dangerous to take too many vitamins?
A. It's dangerous to take too much of any fat-soluble vitamin, because when too much of it accumulates, it can damage vital organs like the kidneys and liver.

Q. What groups of students are most likely to have vitamin deficiencies?
A. Any student who doesn't get a balanced diet risks a vitamin deficiency. Obvious candidates are students on fad diets—teenage girls who want to be slim or wrestlers trying to achieve and maintain low weights.

Girls are less likely than boys to get all the vitamins they need, just because boys eat more, and girls frequently diet.

Q. Can vitamin deficiencies keep a child from doing well in school?
A. Vitamin deficiencies can keep children from growing and developing normally—and that can affect school performance.

Q. What can parents do about children who don't eat balanced diets?
A. First, parents should find out what their children really eat—some kids eat from only one food group. If there's an imbalance, parents should try to correct it.

Parents can try to suit their children's diet to their bodies' needs and their personalities. Many children, for example, can get up to one-fourth of their nutrients from snacks—if parents make sure nutritious snacks are available.

Parents can be creative about offering healthy foods for breakfast, too.

Q. What can school employees do to help kids get their vitamins?
A. School employees can provide information children and parents need to make the right choices about what to eat.

They can notice when adolescents and teens replace milk and juice with soft drinks, coffee, tea, and alcohol and eat fast food snacks instead of nutritious meals.

It's hard to tell young adults what to do, but they can be encouraged to take better care of themselves—and informed of the consequences if they don't.

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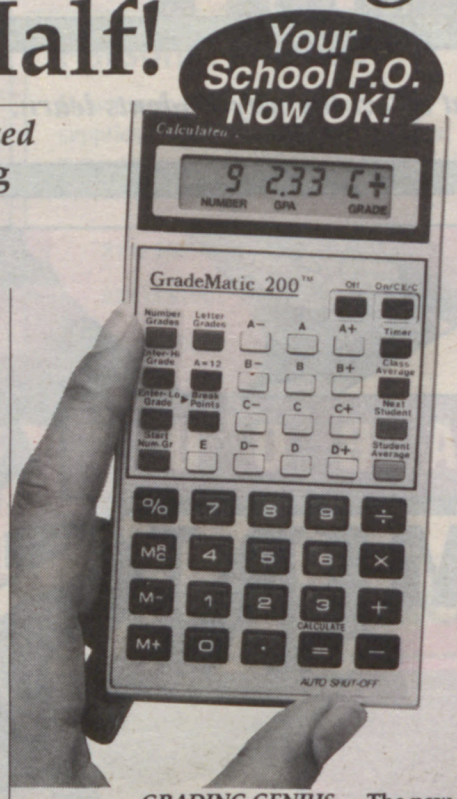

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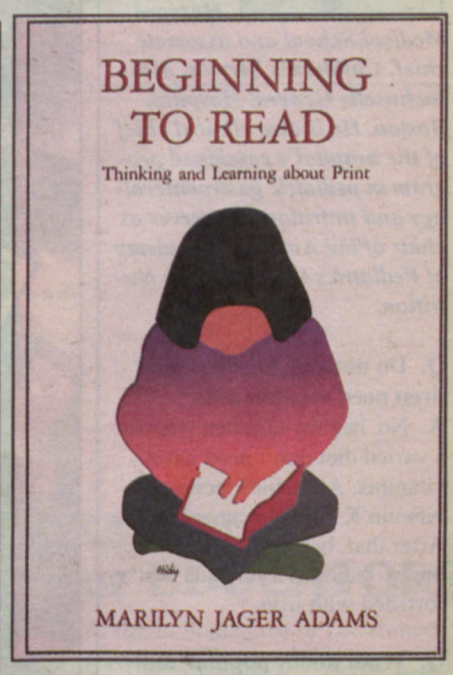
BOOK BEAT

Making a Nation of Easy Readers

How overlearning letters, spelling patterns, and words helps kids become fast, fluent skillful readers.

Beginning To Read: Thinking and Learning About Print
By Marilyn Jager Adams
MIT Press. 494 pp. $29.95.



Five years ago the U.S. Congress commissioned a report on how the nation's teachers can best take advantage of phonics in beginning reading instruction. This book by Marilyn Jager Adams, a cognitive and developmental psychologist working under the auspices of the University of Illinois Center for the Study of Reading, is that report.

In *Beginning To Read*, Adams reviews hundreds of studies about what goes on in kids' heads when they learn to read. Besides describing that process, Adams identifies practices that will produce the most effective readers.

You might hope there's one place in the book where you'll find all the pedagogical recommendations. There isn't. But if there were, the highlights might look like this.

Training in phonics—regularities in letter-sound correspondence—is necessary to learn to read, but it isn't sufficient.

The payoff to phonics is meaning, so "immersion—right from the start—in meaningful, connected text is of vital importance."

Phonics is especially important, Adams believes, for "low readiness readers," who come to school lacking "print awareness." Unfortunately, it's hard to teach them phonics because print awareness is a prerequisite for phonics instruction.

'Print Aware' means knowing that—

- ► Words are recoverable.
- ► Clusters of letters with spaces in between are probably words.
- ► Words contain letters.
- ► Letters have their own shapes and names.
- ► All writing is comprised of letters.
- ► Print (European-style) reads left to right.
- ► Books in European languages have a standard format: front to back, left to right, top to bottom.
- ► Reading has rewards: entertainment and information.

To make children print-aware, Adams prescribes a print-rich classroom—

- ► Where the teacher might read a (literally) big book aloud to a whole class just to be able to point out that the pictures are on the same topic as the words.
- ► Where the teacher might use a meaning-oriented approach like language experience—"talk written down"—making labels, captions, posters of things the kids say (but always exactly what they say, not a paraphrase).

But still, Adams warns, phonics will be slow going. (Maybe boring?) It will be hard for kids to recognize enough words to be able to read text from the start. Especially when there are basal reading series that offer phonics lessons but don't follow up with decodable words in the connected text.

Adams' remedy is simple: Teach more efficient phonics. And avoid the temptation to finesse phonics lessons in favor of spending more time on stories in the basal, or to relegate phonics exercise to seatwork (which gets less student attention than teacher-taught material).

Kids need direct instruction, Adams contends, in recognizing letters, syllables, even the sub-syllables that she calls onsets and rimes (basically syllables divided the way you'd divide them for Pig Latin).

Beginning To Read has a message for middle school and junior high teachers, too: students who are good readers but appalling spellers are heading for an academic fall. Their poor spelling is not a harmless idiosyncrasy, but a sign that they don't have enough word patterns in memory. When these kids begin to see unfamiliar words in new contexts, as in secondary science texts, they'll draw a blank. The remedy: spelling lessons.

Phonics has long been an issue of the political right. And unlike many so-called "educational" issues, phonics also divides the education community—though along different fault lines than it does the political community.

In an afterword, reading gurus Dorothy Strickland and Bernice Cullinan argue for an alternative approach to beginning reading, which they call "emergent literacy." They decry Adams' emphasis on direct instruction in phonics, contending that understanding of how print works emerges quite naturally when kids read "good stories that intrigue and engage them."

—Nancy R. Needham, Book Review Editor

INTERNATIONAL

Futrell Assumes Top Confederation Post

In August, former NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell was elected president of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, at WCOTP's biennial Delegate Assembly meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica. NEA Today *staffer Jane Power asked Futrell to talk about how the new position fits into her life and work.*

Q. Are there any common threads connecting your work in WCOTP with your presidency of NEA?

A. Yes, definitely. I became active in the Association at a time when decisions were being made about how desegregation would be carried out. I saw then how important it was for teachers to have a part in the decisions that affect them.

I know that if you want something done, you have to get involved. You also have to speak with one voice. And you have to take the initiative, not let others set the agenda.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish in your four years as WCOTP president?

A. WCOTP is a confederation, so the members set the agenda. But I do have four goals that I set for myself as president: to achieve unity of the education profession worldwide, to make WCOTP more progressive and organizationally stronger, to get WCOTP on a firm financial footing, and to give WCOTP a stronger voice in international organizations—UNESCO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the UN—that impact on teachers and children.

Q. Delegates at the WCOTP convention discussed the possibility that WCOTP will unite with the three smaller international federations of teachers. What do you think of that idea?

Newly elected WCOTP President Mary Hatwood Futrell speaks to WCOTP delegates at the group's August meeting in Costa Rica. Inset photo shows Futrell with her predecessor, Joseph Itotoh of Nigeria, and NEA member Virgie King of Alaska.

A. I'd like to see the whole education family—not just K-12 teachers, but university and college, preschool, support workers—unite in the next four years. But first people need to talk about any reservations they have, not wait until the process has gone further.

Q. What opportunities do you see in the opening up of Eastern and Central Europe and the strengthening of contacts with the teachers unions there?

A. I'm delighted at all the undreamed-of changes we've seen in the past year, but they present us with a major challenge. We need to help those organizations to be true trade unions.

We also need to help them use education to make better nations —because without education, they're still shackled. We can operate programs, share materials, provide training.

On our own national level, there's a window of opportunity to use the peace dividend to rebuild our infrastructure from a human perspective.

We have to make sure we use our resources to help our children. So I'd say we need to work with the other teacher confederations to make that a worldwide effort.

President Havel of Czechoslovakia told Congress this year, "We can learn from your experience in being free, but you can learn from our experience of repression, too. Together, we can work to make sure everyoné's free."

My vision is of a world where no one is hungry, homeless, a refugee, or has to fear for his or her life. That world has never existed—but that doesn't mean it can't exist. I believe education is the key to ridding our world of poverty and war. Educated people are harder to suppress. The authoritarian regimes, wherever they are, know that—after all, the people they go after first and treat the most severely are the teachers and professors.

Q. You've been a leader in WCOTP's women's caucus, established in 1980. What impact has it had?

A. The caucus has achieved more for women in its 10 years than WCOTP did in its previous 28. We started counting women: how many are there on the platform? How many listed as speakers?

Now there's a women's concerns committee of the WCOTP Executive Committee. The caucus helps women become comfortable speaking up in meetings.

You have to convince even educated women to speak up, you know. It's not just that many cultures have barriers to women's taking part in decisions. Many of the women who come to the Assemblies aren't used to operating on the international level.

Q. How will your new position change your life?

A. Basically, very little. My life couldn't be more hectic than it's been in the past 10 years. I've learned to be a local, a state, and a national president—I'll just learn this, too. And I'll still be a graduate student in education at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., still be teaching there, still be co-director of an educational laboratory there.

When I started out as NEA president, traveling and giving speeches, people asked if a woman could possibly manage that kind of hectic schedule, getting around unfamiliar towns, carrying her own bags. I have callouses from carrying my bags.

The difference is that as WCOTP president, I may sometimes be on the road a month at a time—and I'll be going some places where I can't call home every night.

Elsewhere in The World

In Liberia: Civil War Hits Schools

In Liberia, a teachers union's responsibilities could hardly be broader.

"One of the teachers killed fleeing from the civil war had a seven-month-old baby," notes union head Saa Philip Joe. "People brought the child to us to make sure it was taken care of."

Joe himself has been targeted for assassination. Members of his union hid him for two weeks and then helped him get across the border to Sierra Leone. Many other teachers now live in hiding or have fled the country.

To help Liberian teacher refugees, send money to account #003-01-145936950 (administered by the Guineean teachers union) at the Societe Generale des Banques, Conakry, Guinee. Note on the check what organization (if any) it comes from, and that it's for Liberian teacher refugees.

Saa Philip Joe, head of Liberia's teachers union.

In Honduras: The Union in the Mirror

The real teachers union in Honduras still lives, reports Honduran teacher leader Juan Ambrosio Sabio of Honduras—despite eight years of jailings, murders, and disappearances, despite Honduran government attempts to create an "official" teachers union that has seized the real union's headquarters, dues money, and name!

The "official" union continues to get government support, but Sabio, a newly elected WCOTP vice-president, says his union still has the majority of members.

Honduran teachers are demoralized, not just by the repression of their union, but by the underfunding of education. Rules imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank mean education gets 19 percent of the national budget while the country's international debt gets 30 percent. The military get the bulk of the rest.

"The government calls WCOTP support 'international Communist help,'" notes Sabio, who was jailed in 1985 and released after an international campaign. "But whatever they call it, the solidarity of teacher groups can make a big difference for us."

In South Africa: Teachers Set the Pace

"We didn't ask permission; we just got busy with the job," says H. H. Dlamlenze, head of the African Teachers Association of South Africa.

That's how Black, Colored, and Indian teacher organizations have recently made plans to unite and form a union of some 200,000 members.

"This is a milestone in our country," Dlamlenze explains. "Our action is actually aimed at dismantling apartheid. We want one educational system, not many based on race."

The new South African Democratic Trade Union expects at least one white teacher group to apply for membership this fall. —*J.P.*

TECH TALK

Computer as Change-Agent

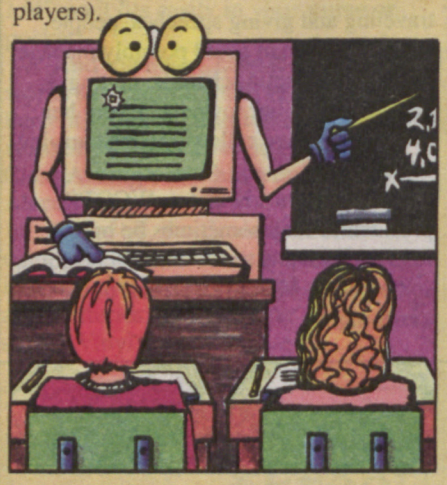
A sizable body of teachers believe using computers in the classroom has changed their teaching. For the better. That's the opinion, in fact, of most of the 608 teachers surveyed in *Accomplished Teachers: Integrating Computers into Classroom Practice* by the Bank Street College of Education Center for Technology in Education.

These teachers—all of them experienced users of classroom computers—say using computers frees them to spend more time with individual students. And they're able to act more like coaches and facilitators. The end result, says the Bank Street report: a more student-centered classroom.

Among the findings of the survey:

► The poll respondents—who teach in grades 4 through 12 in all 50 states—are comfortable with the technology they've got. They learn how to use it on their own time, take advantage of local opportunities to learn, and receive considerable local support.

► The schools where these teachers work invest heavily in technology and use it in a wide variety of classroom situations. These schools average more than twice the number of computers found in a random nationwide sample (59 per school, in contrast to 26), and many also have more sophisticated technologies (e.g., hard-disk drives, laser printers, videodisc players).



► These teachers use the computers in many ways. They have an extensive collection of instructional software for both drill-and-practice programs and problem-solving, and software for use with word processors and databases.

► It takes time—fully five to six years of teaching with computers—for these teachers to develop well-organized practices using computers.

► Although obstacles to the integration of computers have lessened for most of these teachers over the years, significant barriers still remain. The most serious problems, the teachers say, are a shortage of adequate hardware and too little time to plan and carry out computer-based lessons.

Here are what two of the teachers had to say about using computers in the classroom:

"My teaching role has gone from direct teaching and directing to more of a monitor, facilitator, resource person. The students are doing more discovery-type learning and relying more on their resources to gain new knowledge ... applying their skills more."

—A Maine elementary teacher

"As students use computers for writing, they work more independently and cooperatively.... I spend more time discussing ideas and ways to solve writing problems."

—A New Mexico high school teacher

For a copy of the report send a $5 check made out to the Bank Street College of Education, to Laura Bryant, Center for Children and Technology, Bank Street College of Education, 610 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10025.

TV in the Classroom

More of the nation's teachers are turning to television and video to enhance learning, notes a new national survey of 500 teachers, conducted for NEA.

Survey results show schools use live programming and videotape from the Public Broadcasting System most often. Nearly 60 percent of schools use PBS offerings. The major networks each reach more than 25 percent of schools.

The Discovery Channel and its daily one-hour education program, *Assignment Discovery* are the most widely used cable television tools in grades one through 12. The next most-used cable network is Arts and Entertainment.

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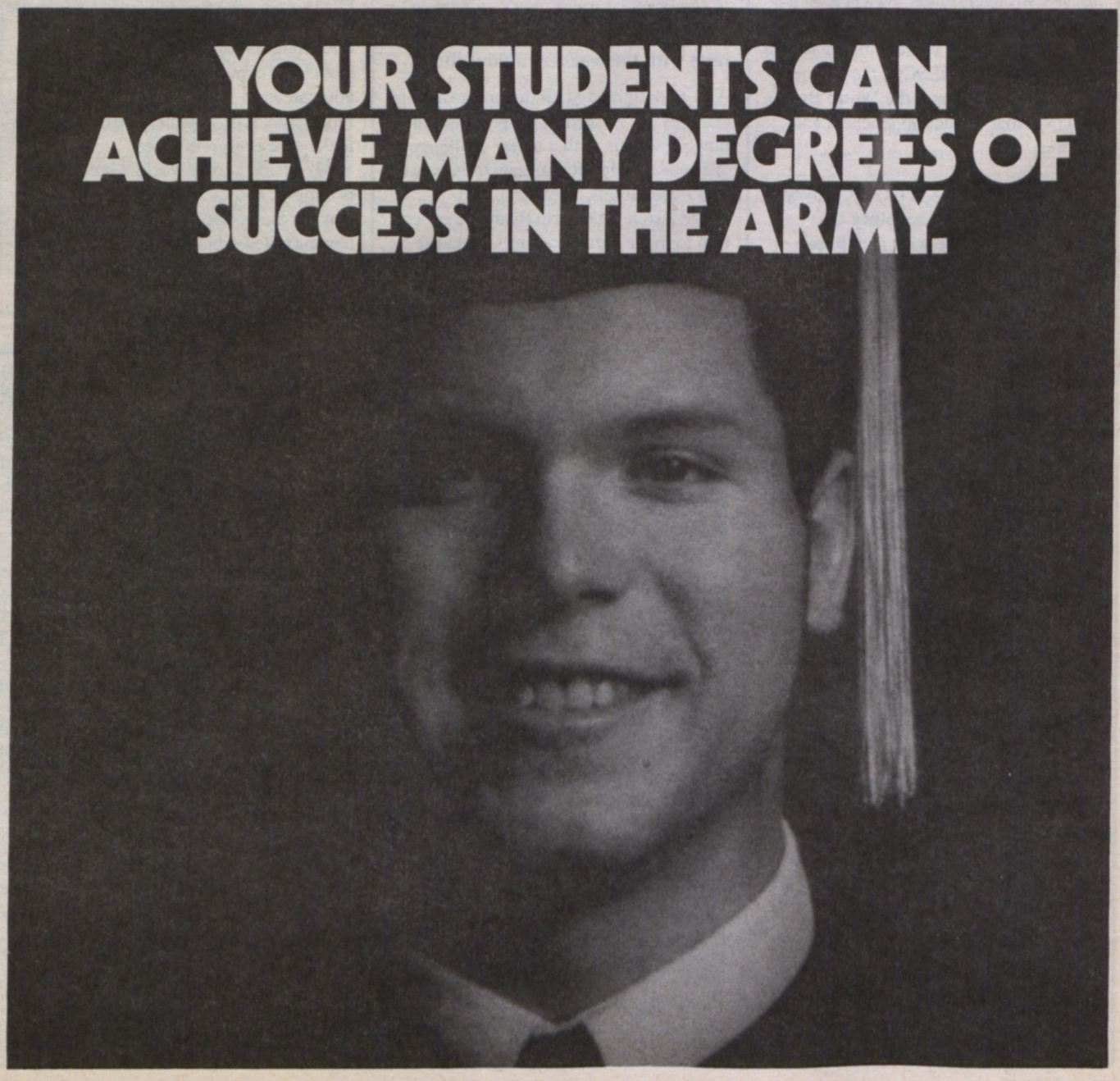


YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

TDA Payout Strategies: What's Best for You?

How great is a great investment if you really don't get much out of it?

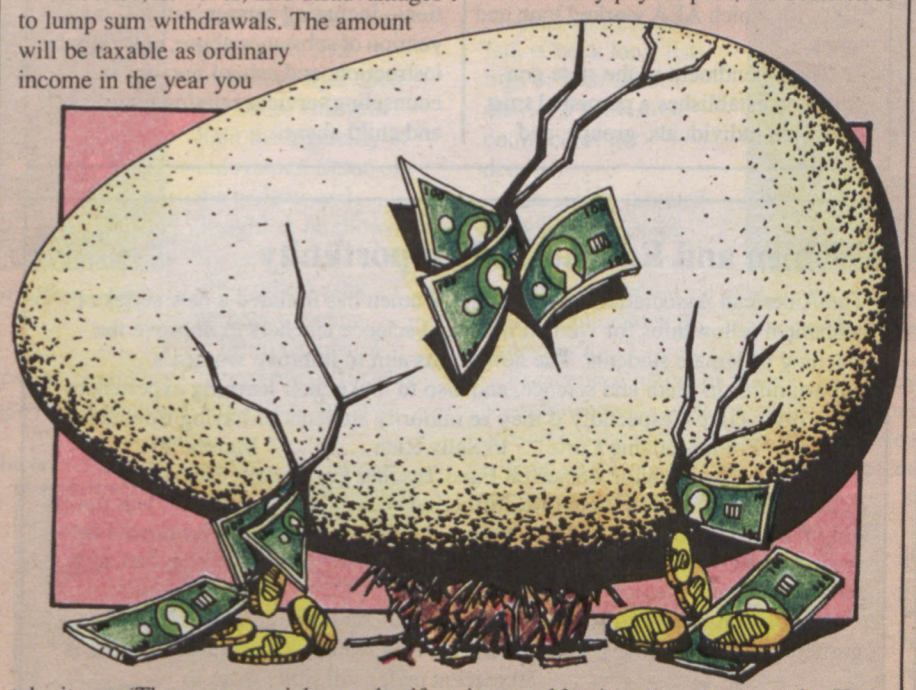
Tax deferred annuities (TDAs) are popular investment choices for school employees looking ahead to retirement. But making that choice doesn't end the need to make informed decisions—this time about when and how to use the funds. If you've been diligently contributing to a 403(b) tax-deferred annuity (TDA) for the past several years, congratulations! Most likely, you shopped carefully for the best contract—and when you retire a few years from now, you anticipate a hefty nest egg to supplement your pension.

A word of caution: Don't count your chickens before they hatch! How you handle the money you've accumulated in your TDA is crucial. The wrong move could rob you of much of your hard-earned savings.

First, it's important to understand your contract's withdrawal provisions. If you withdraw money from your TDA before age 59-1/2 (age 55 if you retire early), you may owe taxes plus an IRS penalty. The concept is much like that of an individual retirement account (IRA). In addition, the insurance company that operates the TDA might impose charges of its own. (Some companies have started calling their withdrawal charges "contingent deferred charges"—but they can be just as steep.)

An advantage of withdrawing your funds, either in a lump sum or over a period of time, is the increased flexibility you gain. You may be able to earn a much higher return elsewhere, especially if you're an experienced investor. Another plus is that the money becomes part of your estate and can be passed on to whomever you wish.

There are, however, also disadvantages to lump sum withdrawals. The amount will be taxable as ordinary income in the year you take it out. (There are special tax rules if you roll the money into an IRA.) Depending on how you invest the lump sum, the interest it earns may be taxable, too.



Another, more flexible choice allows you to "draw down" on the principal in your account. This way you can get regular monthly payments without actually buying an annuity from the insurance company. Rather, you keep your options open for buying an annuity at a later date. This option is often called a "specified payment option."

With either withdrawal option, you do run the risk of outliving your savings. This is why you might want to *annuitize*; that is, sell the accumulated value of your TDA to purchase another insurance company contract that will guarantee monthly payments to you or your beneficiary—or both—for as long as you live, or until the second recipient dies, or for a set number of years.

The choice is critical—once you agree to an annuity payout plan, the decision is irrevocable. A worst-case scenario: You sell all your savings into a "life-only" annuity, which pays only while you're alive, and then you die the next day, leaving your dependents nothing.

To compensate for this risk, a life-only annuity option offers the highest monthly payment. It's best suited, however, for those with no dependents and/or lots of life insurance coverage.

"Life and period-certain" payouts are safer, because they provide a guaranteed number of payments to your beneficiary if you die soon after making a payout choice.

"Joint and survivor life income" is another popular option. Because of the chances that more payments will be made under a "life and 20-years certain" option, they may be only 85 percent or less of what you'd get under "life only." The actual size of your monthly payment will depend on the payout option you select, how much money you're putting into the annuity, your age, and the company's annuitization rates.

When you annuitize, you don't have to use the same company that now manages your TDA. In fact, shopping for the best annuitization contract is essential. NEA Special Services has discovered that the best and worst annuity rates can differ by 50 percent or more.

This brief article can only outline the many factors you should consider as you near retirement. A financial planner or tax professional can give you more information and advice. Also, as a member of the NEA family, you have access to many resources. Some NEA affiliates offer TDA workshops and counseling. In addition, NEA Special Services publishes literature helpful in explaining the fundamentals and comparing TDAs. The *Special Services Consumer Guide to Tax-Deferred Annuities* is yours for the asking. Each year, NEA Special Services also publishes an extensive study, *Tax-Deferred Annuities: A Comparative Analysis*. Your local or state Association may be able to lend you a copy, or you can purchase one for $25.

For ordering information or to request a free copy of the Special Services TDA consumer guide, contact NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe St., Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 (1-800-637-4636).

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Students, Teachers, and Administrators

Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle

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Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle

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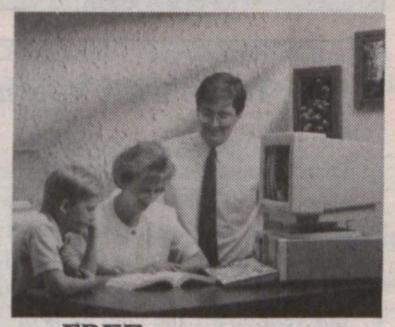

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Looking Back

An update on stories from previous issues.

Robert Pope

Utah Teacher Still on the Run

Ogden, Utah, middle school teacher Paul Pilkington's dedication, love, and perseverance in distance running (People, April) are now paying off in competition—so conspicuously that the September issue of *Runners' World* devoted a feature article to his story.

The magazine notes that Pilkington recently turned in a significant performance in the London marathon. Running against world-class competition, Pilkington came in 12th.

This year, Pilkington is taking a sabbatical from the classroom to work on his master's degree and concentrate more on running. He still has his eye on the prize: the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Looking Ahead

In Florida, Pinellas County Association members are part of an NEA Learning Lab project that's redefining what it means to be a professional. Read all about it in the November *NEA Today*.

Are your students turned on to politics or couldn't they care less? In next month's issue, learn how teachers are working to combat civic apathy.

Alabama Voters Boost Health Education

Members of the Alabama Education Association are happy now that voters have approved the "Penny Trust Fund" amendment (State Side, April '90), for which AEA worked long and hard.

The amendment to the state constitution establishes a perpetual trust to which individuals, groups, and corporations can make voluntary contributions. None of the principal and only 90 percent of the interest can be spent in any one year—which means the fund will keep growing.

One of the things the money can be used for is public school health education—including immunizations, prevention of substance abuse, nutritional instruction, and school nursing and counseling services relating to disease and child abuse.

Women and Educational Opportunity

The American Association of University Women has initiated a new series of sabbatical fellowships for women math and science teachers to improve the teaching of female students. The new grants aim to improve women's opportunities in math and science, and also to make their learning experiences more productive—especially if they're minority students or having trouble in school. ("From Madame Curie … to Sally Ride … to …" March '90).

Known as the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund Teacher Enrichment Sabbatical Fellowships (Roosevelt, noted for furthering women's opportunities, was not only First Lady but an AAUW member), the $3,000-$10,000 awards are for projects AAUW believes will make positive changes both in and beyond each recipient's home district.

Association member Kathleen Davis of Cass Junior High in Darien, Ill., garnered one of the first grants awarded. Davis, whose advanced math class is 80 percent male, will study ways to motivate more girls to enter the program.

Andrew Rafkind

L.A. Deals with Youth Suicide

The Los Angeles Unified School District has over three years' experience with its three-part program to prevent student suicide ("Preventing Teen Suicide," Human Rights, May/June). Prevention, intervention, and postvention are the vital parts of "Crossroads: Coping with Crisis," initiated by the Suicide Prevention Unit of the Student Guidance Services Division.

The program's prevention phase begins with seventh graders. The students learn how to improve self-esteem, identify and handle depression, recognize suicide warning signs, and identify people in the school and community who can help. In tenth grade, students review the warning signs of suicide, learn how suicidal behavior affects others, and identify resources available to a suicidal person.

In the program's intervention component, district and local school crisis teams are trained to identify students who are likely to attempt suicide and to provide direct intervention and referral services to them and their families. Postvention involves the training of school teams to reduce the trauma for students, their families, and school staff after a suicide or attempted suicide.

Computers Help Raise Student Test Scores

Orangeburg (S.C.) District 5 (Local Look, Feb. '90) was honored recently for its use of computers in dramatically raising the education levels of its poor, predominately minority students.

District 5 received a Computerworld Smithsonian Award, one of several that "showcase individuals who are using computers to push forward the educational and business frontiers of tomorrow." The award is granted by *Computerworld* newspaper president and publisher Fritz Landmann, the Smithsonian Institution, and 52 computer company CEOs.

A few years ago parent-teacher organizations in Orangeburg District Five bought the district's first 10 computers. In 1988, the district purchased 140 more.

This move—and specifically a computer program in remedial math and language arts—deserves much of the credit for an increase in student achievement rates on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, according to the Orangeburg District Five Education Association. The district's average CTBS score rose from the 14th percentile in 1975 to the 57th in 1988.

Texas Won't Retain Kindergartners

As of September 1, Texas districts are barred from retaining pupils in prekindergarten and kindergarten ("Retention Holds Kids Back," Nov. '89). The ruling was adopted unanimously by the Texas Board of Education in July.

The Deputy Commissioner for Curriculum for the Texas Education Agency, Virginia Bergen, explains that being overage in grade is one of the strongest predictors of dropping out of school.

She says the board recognized that children placed in transitional programs between prekindergarten or kindergarten and first grade are "placed in jeopardy of being overage in the first grade simply by virtue of the fact that they enrolled in those programs." Other states have passed similar measures.

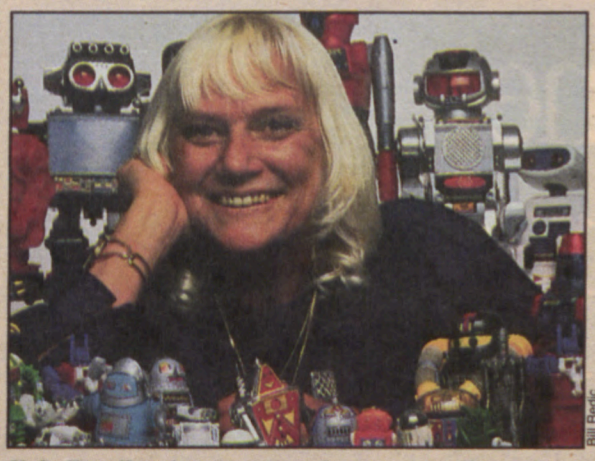
Looking Way Back

In October 1975, NEA members celebrated a huge lobbying victory when Congress overrode President Ford's veto of a key federal education funding bill.

Your NEA

NEA Backs Two Special TV Series

Invention Premieres on Discovery Channel



Bill Radic

K.G. Engelhart's robots keep house— or office—for the disabled.

As part of its 1990 fall media campaign, NEA is cosponsoring *Invention*, a 13-part series produced by the Discovery Channel and the Smithsonian Institution. The magazine-style cable TV series will spotlight the ingenuity of innovators. Some of the gadgets and designs to be shown are now part of daily life—others sank without a trace.

From October 2 through December 25, *Invention* will air on the Discovery Channel every Tuesday from 9:30-10 p.m. Eastern Time. Each segment of the show will repeat the next evening at 11:30 p.m.

Using the Smithsonian's collection of historic films, photographs, and objects, the series gives historical perspective to inventions from the espresso machine to the turkey call, the microchip to a car that runs on vegetable oil, kitchen robots for the handicapped, and the electric guitar.

John Werner

Saving old tapes with new tech: Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart.

Each magazine-style program will contain three features of six to seven minutes each, plus two short segments of about two minutes each. Sample segments—

"Dr. Moller's Flying Car"—Enjoy a bird's-eye view as aeronuatical engineer Paul Moller demonstrates the M-200, a vertical take-off–and–landing vehicle he hopes will eventually replace the family automobile.

"Reporting from Space"—See how new spy-in-the-sky technology works and envision the day when a consortium of American news networks uses its own satellite to keep tabs on the whole global village at the speed of light.

"Nomad"—Learn how visually impaired people using an electronic pad can "read" tactile maps, charts, and diagrams and hear a synthesized voice providing information at selected points.

Lucky Severson, correspondent for NBC-TV's *Today* show will host *Invention*. Roger Kennedy, director of the National Museum of American History, will provide commentary.

Math Teacher Jaime Escalante Hosts PBS Series

NEA member Jaime Escalante, renowned math teacher from East Los Angeles' Garfield High, will host a new TV series called *Futures* on PBS this fall. (Check local listings or your school district's television coordinator for details.)

Navy flier Donnie Cochran (left) joins Jaime Escalante (second from right) and class on PBS.

The series, targeted to junior and senior high school students, demonstrates real-world applications of mathematics.

Escalante, a native of Bolivia, has received national acclaim for his accomplishments with inner-city students in advanced calculus, generally considered the most difficult of all secondary school subjects.

How will *Futures* relate math to popular topics—and students' lives? A few sample segments:

Meet the designers of Viper, Magic Mountain's wildest ride.

"Sound Engineering"—Students will travel behind the scenes to a rock concert, recording studio, the Hollywood Bowl, and the film industry to see how math concepts underlie sound technology.

"Sports/Performance"—The crack of the bat, the curve of the pitch, even sprinting and skiing are shaped by technological innovation. World-class athletes from many sports join Escalante to explore the impact of mathematics on athletics.

"Fashion"—"The mathematics of fashion" is important to the designer, manufacturer, buyer, and merchant.

Futures is produced by the Los Angeles-based Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education (FASE) and FASE Productions. In developing the series, FASE has the help of an advisory committee of professional organizations that includes NEA, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board, the Linkages Project/Hispanic Outreach, and the League of United Latin American Citizens.

Celebrating American Education Week

Communities throughout the nation will be saluting their public schools during the week of November 11-17—American Education Week. Theme for this, the 69th annual AEW observance, will be "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone."

Over the years, schools have found several highly effective ways to recognize the contributions of educators, including waging campaigns for community involvement in schools, reaching out to local businesses, and making news for local media.

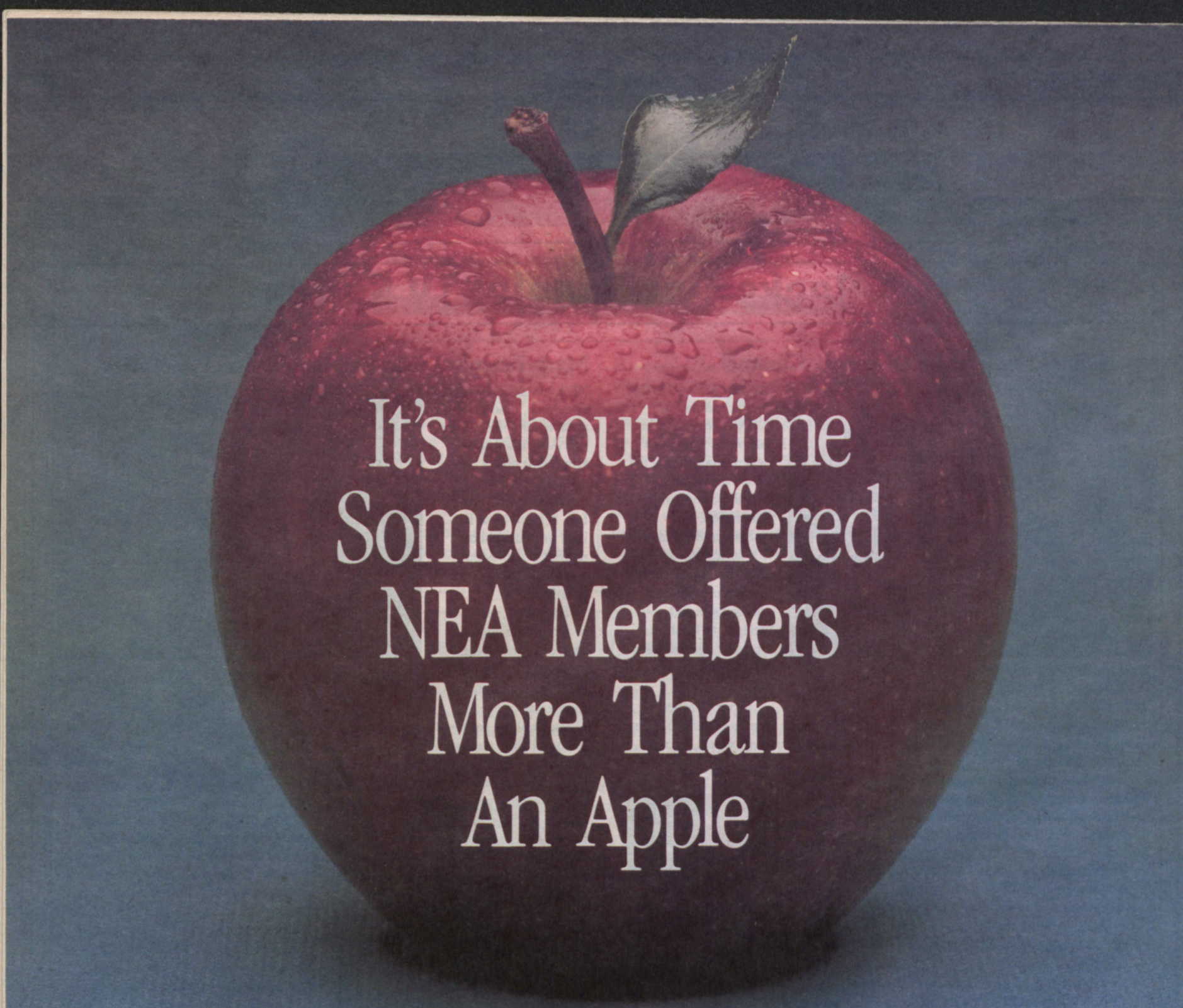
November 14 has been designated National Educational Support Personnel Day—a special day to honor the contributions of school support staff.

In August, NEA mailed each local Association president and Uniserv office a kit full of ideas for making the most of the Week through outreach to local businesses, civic, and community leaders, parents, senior citizens, and the media. For more information about AEW activities, contact your local Association.

Grand Prize Winner

Spend $18,000 a year—without paying a penny! That's the deal NEA member Darwin Eastman got when he won the 1990 grand prize in the 21st Century MasterCard Promotion. From now through 2000, Eastman will start every year with an $18,000 credit to his NEA MasterCard. Eastman's purchase of an $18 tank of gas on his NEA MasterCard was one of more than 330 million transactions and placed him in the national competition.

Eastman, a ninth grade science teacher, was called out of his class at James Madison Junior High School in Appleton, Wisc., to get the news of his win. MasterCard officials flew him and his wife to New York to receive the prize; later, the NEA MasterCard program flew them to the NEA convention in Kansas City.



We Do! Now NEA members can borrow from $2,600 to $10,000. The NEA Credit Plan is a financial service offered to members of the National Education Association as a source for unsecured personal loans. These funds can be used for professional or personal expenses — continuing your education, making home improvements, consolidating your household bills — the choice is yours.

Participating in the NEA Credit Plan is easy. All we need from you is a signed completed application to make a credit approval decision. You select the amount of cash you want, the payment program and terms that suit your budget. There are no interviews, no long waiting period, no complicated financial statements to fill out. What's more, if you qualify, you get extra cash anytime during the term of your loan with just a single phone call. The additional amount is simply added to your existing balance with little or no increase in your monthly payment. So don't wait. Call us, today, toll free at **1-800-525-1211**.

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RESEARCH CLUES

Here's Proof: Small Is Better

A new four-year study mandated by the state of Tennessee confirms what many teachers already know: smaller class size helps students succeed. The study—Project Star—focused on students in grades K-3 at 180 schools in inner city, urban, suburban, and rural settings throughout the state.

Each school had at least 57 students at the appropriate grade level, allowing for at least one class of each type studied. The categories were: small with one teacher and 13-17 students, regular with one teacher and 22-25 students, and regular with one teacher and one teacher aide for 22-25 students.

Pupil achievement was measured by the Stanford Achievement Test (K-3) and Tennessee's Basic Skills First Criterion Test (1-3). Pupil development was measured by the Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory (SCAMIN).

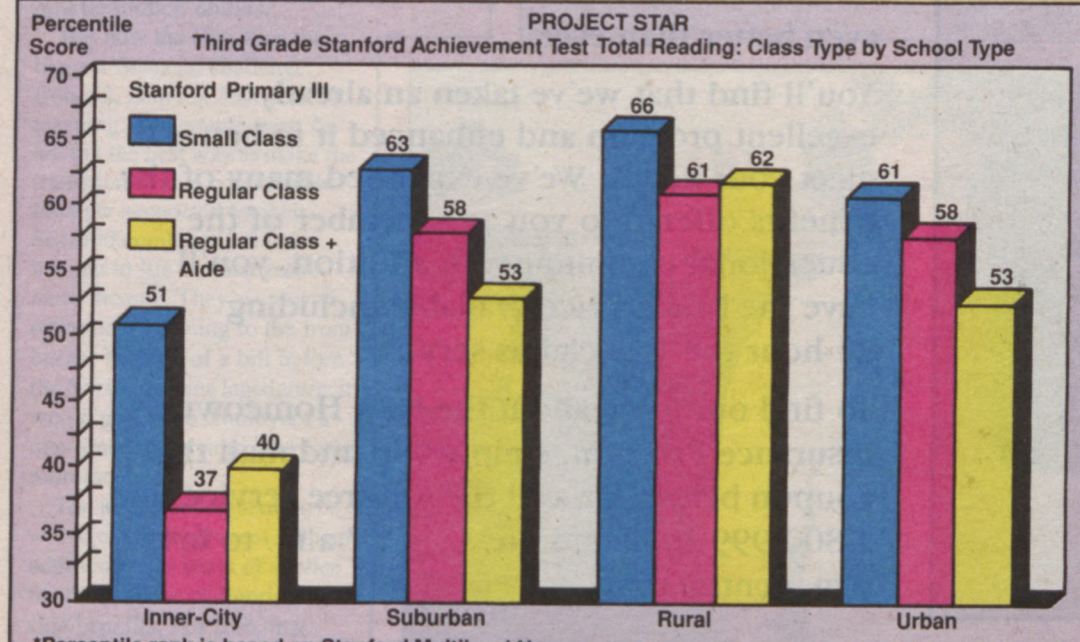
Test results were revealing. For example, kindergartners in small classes who took the Stanford Achievement test in reading scored at the 59th percentile, students in regular classes at the 53rd percentile, students in regular classes with aide at the 54th percentile; in math, students in small classes scored at the 66th percentile, students in regular classes at the 61st percentile, students in the regular classes with aide at the 61st percentile.

Test results were at least as dramatic for first, second, and third graders.

Below is a chart showing how well third graders attending inner-city, suburban, rural, and urban schools did on the reading portion of the Stanford Achievement Test.

The study was conducted and managed by a consortium of four universities: Tennessee State, Memphis State, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Vanderbilt. Former NEA President Helen Bain, who is also immediate past Director of Class Size Studies at Tennessee State, presented the study findings to the NEA Board of Directors last spring, citing that this was the first large research with test score results that clearly makes the case for smaller classes.

"Teachers with smaller classes can be trained to use those logistics to help students even more," says Bain. "For example, they'll have the time to work in depth with each child and get immediate feedback. They can also show parents how to supplement school work. Teachers also can sponsor more field trips; after all, three cars are all that's needed for transportation."



Intuitive Approach May Be Mistake

Teachers who rely on intuition when it comes to motivating their students, might want to consider some new research that advises caution. Sometimes solutions brainstormed from intuition may lead to more student time on task, but not necessarily better work.

The most popular methods of motivating students can also backfire, notes a report from Columbia University Teachers College. Here are some common motivational strategies and how they can be ineffective.

Praise. Complimenting something trivial may have no effect on a child who has experienced much failure.

Rewards. To be successful, rewards should focus on effort, not performance.

Easy success. To make students feel confident, teachers need to give them strategies for reaching specific goals.

Increasing student interest. This practice doesn't necessarily go hand-in-hand with increased student participation in classroom decisions.

Encouraging extra effort. Students who feel they're already giving their all will suffer a decrease in confidence.

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Finding The Right Way To Retire

This month's column by financial writer Mary Rowland focuses on Bob and Carolyn Ely of Winston-Salem, N.C. The Elys are looking at the possibility of his early retirement but want to make sure they're financially set before taking the plunge. This is the first of two articles.

When Bob and Carolyn Ely got married, it was immediately evident that they had different financial planning strategies. "Our biggest struggle," Carolyn recalls, "was that I didn't write down checks."

"She wrote checks all right," explains Bob. "She just didn't record them in the checkbook."

Things have changed in 29 years. At least a little. "Now I do write down the amount," Carolyn says. But she still leaves it to her husband to calculate the new balance. And, she says, she still has no idea what the Elys have in assets, what they owe, and what their expenses are.

Never mind. Carolyn's lack of interest hasn't limited the couple's financial performance. Bob, a math teacher at Carver High School in Winston-Salem, N.C., is interested enough for both of them. He's managed the family's business so well that the couple has a net worth of nearly a quarter million dollars.

But now the Elys face their biggest financial challenge. Bob, 52, is in his 30th year of teaching. The couple must figure out the best way to make the transition from a comfortable lifestyle supported by their $61,000 combined annual income to life on their retirement income. They've moved retirement planning to the front burner because of a bill before the North Carolina legislature: it would give state employees a one-time incentive to take early retirement.

The proposed legislation would credit employees with an additional two years of service for the purpose of figuring pension benefits. For Bob, that might mean an extra $1,000 a year in retirement income. "I plan to teach this school year and then look at the status of that bill," he says. "If I decide to retire, I may go back and pick up a couple of courses in accounting that would enable me to do a few things on the side like keeping books and figuring income tax."

At age 49, Carolyn, a guidance counselor at the Atkins Middle School, is in her 26th year of employment. She'd like Bob to teach a few more years so they can retire together. "The first few mornings will be difficult for me if he retires first," she says. Still, she can see the logic of taking the pension sweetener if it's available.

Naturally, thinking about retirement has caused the Elys to review their entire financial picture. It's a rosy one. Their son, Carl, 25, graduated from North Carolina State University last spring with a degree in computer science. He recently landed a job with a computer consulting company near Raleigh. Daughter Lora, 21, works as a banquet coordinator in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Ricky Moon

Carolyn and Bob Ely are looking closely at their finances in light of a new retirement bill pending in the state legislature.

The Elys have paid off the mortgage on their home, recently appraised at $85,000. Four years ago, they formed a group with nine other couples to buy a three-bedroom, three-bath condo on the ocean in Myrtle Beach.

Their share cost $19,000. Monthly payments—which cover everything from property tax to furnishings to maid service—are $250. Each couple has access to the condo for five weeks a year on a rotating basis. "That's the best thing we've ever done," Carolyn says. Although the Elys spend much of their vacation time at the condo, they usually structure another vacation trip around the NEA convention in July. Both are usually delegates.

Although Carolyn says they live a "simple life," the Elys regularly eat dinner out. "Carolyn works all day, and coming home to cook is too much," Bob explains. They also buy season tickets to Winston-Salem's little theater and symphony. Still, Bob's very careful about how they spend their money. And he knows where every penny goes.

The loan on the condo gives the Elys some tax breaks because the interest is deductible. Bob also structured his car loans on a home equity credit line to get an interest deduction for those as well. Interest on a home equity line is still deductible, while deductions for other kinds of consumer interest are being phased out. Only 10 percent of consumer interest is deductible this year, and next year none will be.

Home equity loans can be dangerous for young homeowners with big mortgage payments—a default on the loan would mean foreclosure on their home. But the Elys have paid off their first mortgage, so a $15,000 home equity loan is hardly overstretching and the house is not at risk. Bob made a smart move.

The Elys have put aside money for retirement, too. Both are covered by Social Security. In addition, they belong to the North Carolina State Teacher Retirement System. At the end of each year, they receive statements showing how much each has accumulated. By last spring Carolyn had $32,000, Bob $35,000.

The Elys also have regular deductions made from their paychecks and deposited in tax-deferred 403(b) plans. This money, $5,000 a year for Carolyn and $3,400 for Bob, isn't counted as part of their salaries for tax purposes. Neither the money they contribute nor the interest it accumulates will be taxable until they take it out at retirement.

Bob keeps a close eye on the other investments he's chosen. For example, most of the money is in an annuity. But when the company the Elys had chosen was criticized for not offering teachers a competitive return, Bob took action.

Bob decided that from then on he would put their money into a more competitive vehicle. The one he selected ran into financial difficulties, "but the assets were bought by another company."

The Elys also have about $20,000 in stock to provide an opportunity for growth in their investment portfolio. Bob got his feet wet in the stock market by joining an investment club.

Investment club members contribute $25 to $50 a month each and, as a club, decide where to invest this money. Members do the research and make recommendations. Being a member of the club helped Bob increase his knowledge of stocks. "I started to dabble a little bit here and there," he says. Now he owns stock in Duke Power, a utility; Gen Corp, the former tire company; and Penobscot Shoe Co., the maker of Old Maine Trotters.

When the Elys retire, they plan to make full use of their five weeks a year at the beach. Carolyn, who loves to travel, would like to take more trips. She also wants to do more volunteer and church work and to remain active in local politics. The Elys intend to improve their home, too.

But first they have some important decisions to make. Bob must decide whether to retire at the end of the school year or teach for a while longer. When he does retire, he must choose among a confusing array of options available for receiving his accumulated pension money. Then he must figure out how much income he can expect from his pension, from Social Security, and from his tax-sheltered annuity—and whether it will cover their expenses.

The Elys are hardly intimidated by this process. In fact, they look forward to it with relish. "So far it's really been a good life," Carolyn says. "I'm sure we'll have fun in retirement, too."

Next Month: The Elys balance their retirement budget.

Letters

Don't Start Over

"Jump Starting School Success" (September) about NEA's campaign for preschool education in public schools was an excellent article. Most high school Home Economics departments have child development courses that run preschool classes. I have run one for 15 years. Perhaps we—the education system and society—could work together, supporting an already existing, positive program for our young children and a career preparation area for our teenagers. Perhaps *NEA Today* could find out about some of these programs. Let's not reinvent the wheel—let's polish it.

Diane Meade
Chaplin, Connecticut

Debating the Debate

A postcard is sufficient to express my disbelief that anybody in the profession can still entertain the notion that "we should make today's classroom the most fun any of us ever had!"(Debate, September). With the state of learning in the schools today, such a mentality indicates an attitude that must share the blame for the ignorance of so many who have gone through our schools.

Debater Ruth Davis is abolutely right. Not only has teaching become less enjoyable (forget that "fun" term), but the demands on teachers from students, as well as other sources, contribute to a battlefront psychology.

Irving Perry
Springfield, Massachusetts

Several thoughts on the September issue of *NEA Today*:

Yes, reduce the oversize format of *NEA Today* to make it easier to handle, but enlarge the type on the NEA Resolutions, which I found fascinating but difficult to read.

And yes, debater Ruth Davis is correct: teaching is not too much fun when parents see no reason for academic excellence and social responsibility, and pass this viewpoint on to their children. When I became a teacher 18 years ago, I never dreamed I would find it necessary to spend time motivating parents as well as their children.

Connie Brown
Marion, Ohio

I generally sit down to read *NEA Today* as soon as it comes. I enjoy it. I take issue with some of the articles and agree with others.

I agree with Ruth Davis. I, too, am tired of the school being a cure-all for all of society's ills. There is entirely too much distraction for parents and students to keep students from performing well in the classroom.

Politicians, businesspersons, and our own administrators preach accountability to teachers, but we have no control of the product we receive, and therefore can have no control on the end product. Also, discipline is a laugh!

Many schools do not have the technology that debater Jane Hydrick has at her disposal. If I did, maybe I could have fun, too.

Phyllis Pope
Medford, Wisconsin

Not So Fast

Your article about Oklahoma's House Bill 1017 ("Rising Up," September) was great but incomplete. True, there were 20,000 teachers who helped a few legislators screw in a light bulb, and your article was accurate as to the situation at the Capitol that week. Our four children really found out what politics was all about as they marched in the rain around the Capitol with placards. Our OEA president at the time, Kyle Dahlem, became a household name last spring. The fight is not over, though, and simply has not been won.

A petition drive to overturn House Bill 1017 has been successful and is now being considered by our courts as to its legality. If it is deemed legal, then a vote of the people may well overturn that bill and put Oklahoma's school system in shambles.

I am excited about House Bill 1017, as are most educators in Oklahoma, but House Bill 1017 and the melee that has followed it is proof-positive that Oklahoma has a long way to go before she can be called a state worthy of her teachers.

Dale Hill
Washita, Oklahoma

Happy Teacher-Driver

For 13 of the last 16 years, I have taught school as well as driven a school bus each day. As the only wage earner in my family, I find it necessary to work extra jobs. I appreciate the opportunity the school board offers me in permitting me to drive as well as teach.

I cannot think of any other part-time job that would permit me to be home in the evenings and on the weekends with my family. I am surprised that teachers in Tennessee find the offer of part-time school bus driving so repulsive (StateSide, Sept.). I agree with Superintendent Rowland. It sure beats "flipping burgers."

Bob Burns
Florence, Kentucky

Ed. Note: NEA Today *incorrectly identified the state as South Carolina in the article.*

Relocation Help

Your article, "What Makes Teachers Cross State Lines" in the April issue hit home for me. I found it very interesting because I did it, bringing along two school-age children. Being a single parent, I had three major concerns: One: my salary and benefits. Two: how well my children would be educated? Three: was there room for professional growth?

I crossed the state lines by 450 miles. I'm thankful that my sister and her husband lived here to help. In your future articles I would very much like to see some concrete advice to teachers who wish to relocate. I did it! But it wasn't easy.

Macletus Smith
Nashville, Tennessee

Parents Helping Kids

I was impressed with the debate "Should Parents Help Kids With School Projects?" (May/June).

Even though Robert Bonnet said *yes* and Tim Henson said *no*, it seemed as if they both concluded that if the project is for a competition, then parents should not help. On the other hand, they were both in favor of parental guidance and suggestions on school projects.

Being a parent, I appreciated their viewpoint because I have found it to be true that when I take the time to listen to the projects my children have been given, and discuss the technique they will use to do the research, the children actually start to enjoy the assignment more and try to do their best. This also gives me a chance to become involved in the academic life of my children and realize the tasks they need to accomplish.

I don't feel that the article was an actual debate because both sides were saying the same thing.

Donna Snyder
Columbus, Indiana

Concerned Parapro

As a 12-year paraprofessional with 52 college credits in the area of special education, I agree with the four women in your article "Who Is a Paraprofessional?" (March).

I assist a teacher with autistic students who are very challenging, but I enjoy my job very much. For me, every day offers a new learning experience. However, it's very hard for me to make ends meet and to continue my education on my salary. Grants aren't available to part-time students, and I don't want to give up my job.

I believe paraprofessionals should receive better salaries, career development opportunities, and help with degree programs. Thank you for publishing this article. I hope you will write more on the subject.

Kim Hordies
Washington, Pennsylvania

Substandard Service

I'm an elementary teacher and my students are avid readers. Over the years, I have subscribed to several book clubs to provide them with inexpensive reading material. For the past two years I have used the Trumpet Book Club for this reason.

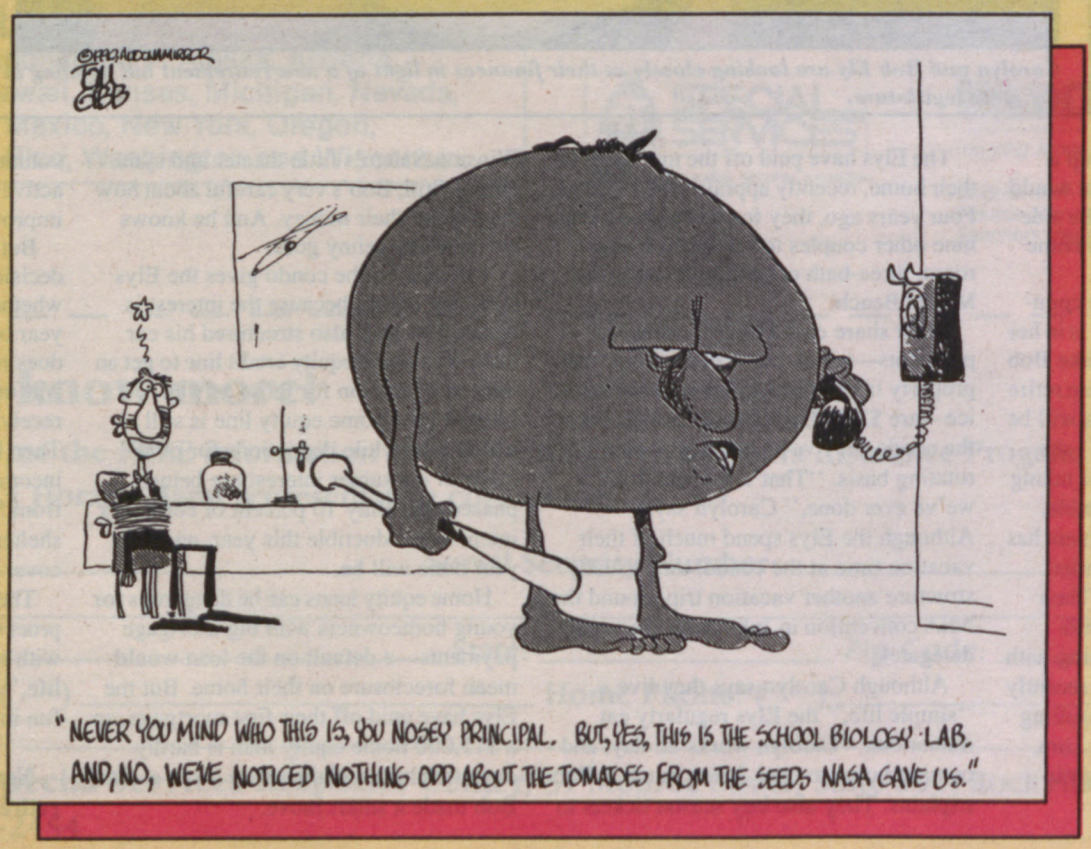
As an incentive, these clubs offer bonus points for the purchase of classroom aids and gifts. I accumulated enough of these as of last March to get a VCR. However, when I sent my accumulated points to the company with my order they were returned to me.

I called the club and was told there was no record of my ordering a VCR and to resubmit my order. I did. After one month I still had not received it. I called again, and again was told that no record existed and that I should resubmit the order.

This continued into early summer when I was told that I could not possibly have accumulated so many points in the time period I did business with the company. When I protested, I was told that the company would make an exception and send me the VCR. As of August I have not received it. When I last called, I was told that gifts are no longer being sent out.

I feel that as an individual teacher, my power to improve the quality of services I purchase is limited. However, if we address this issue collectively, some improvements can possibly be made. It is in the hope of encouraging other teachers to speak out against disreputable business practices that I write this letter.

Larry Wolkin
Meriden, New Hampshire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This month's cartoon is a creation of Tom Gibb, cartoonist for the *Altoona Mirror*. Reprinted with permission of Rothco Cartoons.

Debate

Should All High School Graduates Go to College?

YES

Joe Di Dio

Mabel Cooper Williams is a 24-year classroom veteran, teaching second-third grade at Ferguson-Easley Elementary School in Fayetteville, N.C. She's a member of the Cumberland-Fayetteville Association of Educators and has been a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

College experience is unique. It offers readily available exposure to the world of ideas, to philosophies rooted in traditional and reasoned thought. It places a person on life's path of knowledge as nothing else can.

College experience helps students gain confidence that their personal contributions can make a difference to society. It helps them not only to become well versed in their own academic speciality but to understand how all disciplines are interrelated, how each is inextricably interwoven with the others.

And, of course, a college degree usually means more marketable skills that translate into a higher salary. (In fact, merely *possessing* a college degree can sometimes mean a higher salary.)

U.S. Census Bureau data from 1987 show a direct relationship between salary and level of education. Students who have completed college, for example, earn $627 more on average than those who left college before attaining a degree.

People with professional degrees (doctors and lawyers) earn the most—an average of $3,871 a month. Doctoral degree holders come next, at $3,265 a month, followed by those holding master's degrees ($2,288), bachelor's degrees ($1,841), associate degrees ($1,346), and certificates from vocational training programs ($1,219). High school graduates average $1,045 a month; high school dropouts, $693.

In other words, in terms of earning power, people who just hold a high school diploma have far more in common with dropouts than with college graduates.

One of the earliest predictors of poverty is lack of an education. In today's society, where many working Americans are only two or three paychecks removed from being homeless, education remains the greatest single insulator against unemployment and underemployment.

Most of us can point to someone who's achieved professional success despite never having attended college. There are even people who are tops in their fields who didn't finish high school. But times are changing, and today's youth must prepare for the 21st century rather than put their future into the hands of fate and hope for the best.

Tomorrow's world, demographics tell us, will be one of greater international interdependency and cultural diversity. If the world is to survive, we must bond more closely with our neighbors throughout the world. Mutual respect and knowledge of one another's cultures requires a more in-depth education than high school can provide.

Last year, we watched joyously as the Berlin Wall fell and hundreds of thousands of East Germans poured forth. Shortly before that, students in China had confronted their oppressive regime, demanding freedom and democracy. The South African government recently released Black leader Nelson Mandela from jail after holding him for 27 years. And in Poland, the people have elected the leader of their choice for the first time since before World War II.

The citizens of these countries are our international brothers and sisters with whom we'll work for peace, scientific gains, and a stable world economy. Our students must be educated to meet the challenges—and that means a college education.

Here at home, our own country has been changing, too. Over the past 200 years, we've evolved from an agrarian society to an industrialized one to a technological and computerized one. Students have many career choices today that didn't exist even five years ago.

It's vital that we educate our youth beyond high school so that they'll have optimum opportunity to develop the skills necessary to become productive citizens and informed consumers of the world. They must be educated to believe that our worth as a nation—indeed, our very existence—will be enhanced immeasurably when each of us makes the greatest contribution possible.

The future quality of life for everyone depends upon how well the next generation is prepared.

NO

Joe Di Dio

Gary Sackley, a counselor at McLoughlin Junior High School in Milwaukie, Oregon, is on a one-year leave of absence serving as special projects manager for the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and as education adviser to the state labor commissioner.

As educators, we're the products of higher education. We believe in its value and purpose. Indeed, college can be the ticket to freedom from poverty or a dead-end job.

But a college degree isn't the only ticket to success, despite school reform reports to the contrary. According to the W.T. Grant Foundation, current trends indicate that fewer than 30 percent of today's high school graduates will get a college degree. Should the criterion of American success be so narrowly defined that it excludes the majority of our youth?

As educators, we believe in individual differences, yet we often help perpetuate the elitist attitude held by many in our society that people shelve their brains if they work with their hands.

Long ago, the Greek historian Thucydides advised that a nation making too broad a difference between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools. If we agree, we must place a higher value on learned technological skills.

We educators mustn't continue to praise the former student who becomes a doctor, yet never mention the one who becomes a carpenter. For too long, a blue collar on the workshirt has failed to elicit recognition of the excellence and the contribution it represents. I don't see any future shortage of college graduates, but I do see one of highly trained workers without degrees.

Statistics show that here in America, the average age of a person entering apprenticeship training is 26-plus. The average age of a skilled tool-and-die maker and a machinist journeyperson is 55-plus. We're facing not only a shortage of skilled craftpersons, but also a dwindling supply of experts to pass on their skills to the next generation.

In this nation, schools have close connections with colleges but weak links with employers, who are becoming increasingly critical about the lack of effective school-to-work programs that meet the needs of business and industry and provide meaningful career opportunities for noncollege youth.

Most European countries offer clear paths to skills and economic opportunity for students not planning to attend college. In Sweden, for example, a three-year upper secondary school that develops trade-specific skills has become essential as far as employers are concerned. In West Germany, where most secondary school graduates pursue apprenticeships, the part-private, part-public dual funding system is viewed by educators as an integral part of the schooling system.

The truth is that no European country has an inherent advantage over us in the struggle for global competitiveness—nor does Japan, for that matter. Rather, nations have earned any superiority they've attained by making sustained and significant investments in the education and skills of *all* their citizens.

The nations I've cited are physically small. Perhaps because of that, they're acutely aware of the limited capacity of their resources. Our nation, on the other hand, is accustomed to abundance and has always assumed that human resources will be available when needed. But a declining birthrate and skill level prove that—at least in the case of human resources—we can assume abundance no longer.

It may be true that our higher education is the envy of the world—and we spend a lot of money to keep it so. But, according to the Economic Policy Institute, in every other aspect of education, the U.S. ties for 14th place among 16 industrialized nations. It's a tragedy that when it comes to education and training opportunities, we're nickel-and-diming our youth. Clearly, we haven't adequately invested in our human capital, our individual and collective talents, our skills and productivity.

When our young people graduate from high school, they're ready for college—or nothing. We owe our youth more. Education and training must be for everyone, including the 61 percent of high school graduates who don't go on to pursue a four-year degree.

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